

ANNIE BESANT—BUILDER OF NEW

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Her Fundamental Principles  
of  
Nation Building

Besant Spirit Series

1942

THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE  
ADYAR, MADRAS, INDIA

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**THE·PEOPLE'S·BOOKS**

# Annie Besant—Messenger of the Gods

I NEVER know which volume to appreciate most in the very valuable collection of Dr Annie Besant's masterpieces contained in The Besant Spirit Series of nine volumes and covering with her magic touch the complete field of human activity. Each volume sounds with perfect clarity the essential note she attaches to it, and is indispensable to every citizen in every part of the world who is eager to fulfil his duty to the utmost in every acre of the great estate of his Nation.

In this Besant Spirit Series are set forth in her own incomparable words the details of the fundamental principles she has discovered through long experience to be at the root of right individual citizenship, right nationhood, and right world citizenship.

But in this particular volume, *Annie Besant—Builder of New India*, she is applying these principles in their specific reference to that rebuilding of India which she had it in command from her Superiors to undertake.

Throughout the volume of some 550 pages every word comes straight from her own pen and, with but a very few exceptions, from the daily issues of her great crusading newspaper New India. These have never been re-published before and will come, I am sure, as a wonderful revelation to every reader, however well acquainted he may be with Dr Besant's writings and speeches. But they will not only be a revelation, they will be a rich mine of information and guidance for politicians, statesmen, teachers, religious workers, artists, young people and old people, and the everyday citizen, alike.

In the chapters which follow, no field of National life is left unexplored or unrelated to the architectural plan for the building of the New India-to-be. The book is therefore a true vade mecum for every patriot, young or old, man or woman, who to any extent dedicates himself to his country's uplift.

But it should be clearly realized that as Dr Besant wrote, whether in *New India* or in her innumerable books and pamphlets, so did she work, so did she live, almost every moment of the twenty-four hours, literally so sometimes. Her actions never lagged behind her exhortations. As she preached, so she practised. And when she called, she was ever the first to answer the call to a far fuller measure than she

expected from all others. She was indeed a leader, for she always led, she was always in the forefront

Splendid were the bricks this Master-Builder fashioned for India's rebuilding—bricks which were intended to construct the building of India's Freedom at the very time she made them But the bricklayers both in India and in Britain refused to lay them, so a very great opportunity was lost

These bricks still await their laying, for each one of them, has been fashioned in deepest dedication and in the perfect knowledge of the nature of the building which alone can worthily in design and majesty become the Life of India's Freedom. Today these bricks may be used, or again they may be discarded. Sooner or later they must be used, but woe to the generation which leaves them unused and therefore desecrated

Except for a tribute or two from eminent public workers to her extraordinary power to identify herself with the very soul of India and with the essential foundations of the future happiness of the world, giving herself completely to these two great purposes, every word in this book, except also for a few sentences here and there for the better co-ordination of the text, comes flaming from her lips or from her pen,

and not just words but scintillating records of most strenuous and completely self-sacrificing activity.

There are, perhaps, here and there, passages which she would have modified in the light of the developments which have taken place during the last twenty-five years I am clear she would not have modified her strictures upon Mr Gandhi, for he has but just repeated on a far more terrible scale than heretofore actions which Dr Besant knew she had the duty to denounce in the strongest terms and which Mr Gandhi himself has often denounced with the fullest sense of their wrong And it is impossible to dissociate the man himself from his works But she might have modified—I do not know—her observations on Russia, so greatly has that country changed so far as can be judged Still, I have preferred to include as many of her utterances as possible, so that her judgments on the situation as it then was may be carefully studied, and those relevant—and there are so many—to existing circumstances may be clearly perceived

At the end of the book there appears what may be called an epitome of its contents, but which has been designed as a Call from Dr. Besant to the India of today—faced as India is by substantially the same problems as existed during Dr. Besant's Messengership on the physical plane. The words of the Call are

hers, taken from the book itself, but their relevancy and application are as vital as ever they were, as I am sure will be seen by every reader who, not blinded by prejudice, is alive to the nature of those principles alone on which a free and a great India can be built

Most relevant to perceive is the outstanding fact that Dr Besant was above all a woman of action, for while she was a prolific public speaker throughout the world—greatest orator of her age as she was, she followed the precept of Charles Bradlaugh and of G K Gokhale to the effect that a minute of speech should be preceded by at least an hour and more of hard study and microscopical examination of the facts. Such study and examination, together with the necessary translation into action alone could give the right to speak and to be heard. Thus was it that her utterances and her writings and all her activities were afire with Truth and alive with experience

Dr Besant lived the whole of herself in her speeches, in her writings and in her actions. She lived the whole of herself in all the details of her daily life. She lived in her daily newspaper New India. She lived the New India-to-be, and therefore was she the master-builder of New India.

At last she died for India, only laying down her physical body at the very last moment when it had

become utterly worn out in India's service and could be used no more

Is not the Besant spirit, as very specially exemplified in the present volume, the spirit needed in India at the present time ?

Is not the Besant spirit the spirit of all who would serve the Motherland in self-sacrifice and in self-surrender ?

Therefore has this book been compiled as an act of service to Mother India in her present dire need, so that those who have the honour of being the Mother's servants today may be inspired and strengthened and guided by a very great and noble Servant of yesterday, though in truth of today and tomorrow no less, who more than all others awakened the citizens of India in the villages, towns, and cities—men, women, youth—to some realization at least of the glories of their Motherland, to the greatness of her coming destiny and to their duty to serve her with all their hearts

In these catastrophic and calamitous, yet wonder-pregnant, times the figure of Annie Besant stands towering in the heart of India as the mighty Statue of India's Liberty

May every lover of India throughout the world offer before that Statue the most fervent homage and

draw from it the will and heart and mind to serve the Motherland faithfully to the completion of the new home for her Eternal Life

---

Mrs Adeltha Peterson, with the co-operation of Messrs J L Davidge and C S Sarangam, and of Mrs J W Halsey, is responsible for a compilation which has involved so intricate a research. A debt of gratitude is due from all who love India to these workers whose task, strenuous though it has been, has been a task of love and homage to the Motherland.

Mrs Peterson is specially skilled in this work, but she has been the more successful by reason of her own devotion to the one without whose cooperation there would have been nothing to compile!

Georges Arundale

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# *I. India Pays Tribute to Greatness*



## ANNIE BESANT—EMPIRE BUILDER

*SIR S. SUBRAMANIA IYER, K.C.I.E., LL.D.*

THE Empires which have hitherto been built in the world have been built either by military commanders or by statesmen. The time has now come when Empire-building must have a different basis. The Empire-builder of today must have qualities vastly different from previous builders and statesmen, if today he is to carry out the plan of the Supreme. That means building with the power of religion and without the power of the sword.

The new type of Empire-building, which the world now requires, is most strikingly exemplified by Dr Besant, and the type is seen in her work for India. Her work will best be understood by those who realize the unusual task involved in building India to be a vital part of the British Empire. Here in this land we have many languages and many forms of religion, which separate the peoples into many communities. Now all these must be welded into one whole and unless that work is done here, the British Empire is bound to fail, for without India there is nothing in the British Empire but a name, and if the British Empire does not perform the high

role before it, the future of the world will be seriously handicapped for ages. Therefore, Brotherhood as an essential principle in Empire-building in India is imperative. The Hindus must be united with the Muhammadans, and the Jains and Buddhists.

Now India is not a *tabula rasa*, the Empire-builder is not dealing with primitive peoples with no traditions or culture. India is a land of many communities who cherish a hoary civilization. They have their own religions, sciences, arts, and literatures. Therefore, the Empire-builder cannot do his work with the sword, but must appeal to reason and spirituality, in order to suit the new conditions of building. Who can accomplish this task except a soul of the type of Dr. Besant? The required elements of love and sympathy can only be provided by one of her sex, no man, however great, could show these qualities as finely as a woman. That is why the ego we know as Dr. Besant has been put into a woman's body to do her work in India. She has, however, at the same time, an iron will which supplies the element of the male sex. It is this will that was made manifest in her refusal to concede by way of compromise any deviation in the matter of principle, even for the sake of obtaining her liberty and escaping from persecution that was likely to endanger her life, thus revealing the trait of the martyr.

### *The Indo-Aryan Type*

Dr. Besant's whole life is so spiritual that, as an Empire-builder, she is not aiming at a political institution but a spiritual organization. The especial characteristic mark of that organization may be said to be Aryan, for Dr. Besant

represents the Indo-Aryan type in perfection. She has in her nature all its elements, when lecturing in Christian countries she is recognized as an exponent of Christianity, in India we recognize her as an authority on our religion, and it is the same when she lectures to Buddhist or Muhammadan audiences. Dr Besant has the power of combining the various elements of Indo-Aryan culture and producing from them a beautiful mosaic.

This is important, for if an Empire is to be built in India it must have this character of a mosaic, and unless the builder is himself of this nature of a mosaic, the work cannot be done. Undoubtedly, Dr Besant stands in a peculiar relation to the people of India. She has repeatedly stated her own belief that in her previous lives she has again and again been born in India, and that her present Western birth is only for the purpose of supplementing her Indian character with something of the Western, in order that she might do better her work of organization for India. There is no instance of a single Western person, except herself, who has called forth such universal love and sympathy from every part of India. The educated and the uneducated, the English-speaking and those who know not a word of English, have all united in one profound admiration and reverence, and many are the prayers that go up from temple and shrine on her behalf today.

It is interesting to note how Dr Besant began her work of Empire-building. When she came to India, she did not at once work in the political field. She expounded one religion after another, emphasizing the common unity of faith and aspiration. In India, where religion may degenerate

into fanaticism, with its concomitant of bloodshed. Dr. Besant's first work was to make fanaticism impossible, and today the whole attitude of Hindus to Muhammadans and vice versa has changed, so far as religion is concerned.

Her next work was to put education upon a religious basis. A lasting monument to her education work is the Hindu University, which she organized as the Central Hindu College of Benares. The Central Hindu College, under Dr. Besant's guidance, was the first large institution definitely to embody the teaching of religion as part of its curriculum. The impulse she gave has influenced hundreds of schools to make religious teaching and worship an integral part of education. And to crown all her labours, she has... organized the National Board of Education, comprising many of the leading men in India, to put education on a thoroughly national basis.

The next unique thing that Dr. Besant has done is to bring together the Hindus and the Muhammadans as brothers in one common Nation's work. This is a miracle, the significance of which only those living in India can understand, and though many have helped in this union she stands supremely as the worker of the great miracle. No less marvellous is the fact that this stupendous work has been achieved in the course of three years, since she took up political work. There are few Emancipators who can show such a record of work in so brief a time. Not less noteworthy is her bringing together once again into a common political body the "Extremists" and the "Moderates" of the Indian National Congress. Many had prophesied that these two bodies would never unite, but Dr. Besant has done it.

Dr Besant has brought about union, because of the force of the ideals which she has lived in her own life. One of the prominent Muhammadan leaders, the Hon. Mr. Syed Wazir Hassan, Secretary of the All-India Muslim League, referred the other day in a public meeting "to the spiritual side of her life, and how ennobling from that point of view her influence has been." "I look upon Dr Annie Besant," he said, "as an embodiment and external symbol of what is my ideal of existence. Life is not worth living without such ideals, and we should resist with all our power attacks threatening the fulfilment of our hopes and the attainment of our ideals."

All through Dr Besant's work in India she has continually emphasized the inseparable bond between India and England. Indeed, her insistence upon this essential element of the future has made her to be sharply criticized by those in India who have not believed as firmly in the ideals of the British Empire as she has done. It is just because she has this ideal conception of the British Empire that she has been so anxious to emphasize the unique nationality and worth of the Indian peoples to the British Empire. It is this that has made her preach Home Rule against the wish of ninety-nine per cent of her race in India. The sincerity of her purpose could not be evinced better than by her unflagging work of uplifting the peoples of India in spite of every misrepresentation and even vilification.

One noteworthy characteristic of her political work is its constitutionalism. Never for a moment has she hesitated to denounce violence in every form. She has not been merely critical, she has actually shown the methods

of construction The "Madras Parliament," which she organized for training in Parliamentary method and debate has to its credit a number of carefully worked-out Acts ..

Dr Besant is a profound mystic and when, after twenty-one years of strenuous life in India, she entered into the political field, it was as a practical mystic of a unique type

Dr Besant is unique in that she only uses peaceful persuasion, she achieved her work by calling forth the powers of faith within men. It was well said by Sir Arthur Lawley, when he was Governor of Madras, "Her voice is never raised save to move her hearers to some nobler impulse, to some loftier ideal, to some higher plane of thought"

—1 October 1917, New India

## THE ALLAHABAD "LEADER"

The editor, Sir C Y Chintamani, on Dr Besant's 85th birthday wrote "Where can one find the like of this marvellous personage in the combination of the qualities of enthusiasm, eloquence, power of organization, courage, energy, determination, purposefulness, optimism, and faith in her mission? Truly is she a living wonder. To how many millions has she not been the inspiration and the unapproachable example? If Irish in body, Mrs Besant is Hindu in spirit and faith, and she has looked upon and served India as her Motherland with a devotion and at a sacrifice equalled by few and surpassed by none. We pay her today our tribute of admiration and respect, and are proud to be able to do so"

**MR. JINNAH**

"No other person has worked and served our cause with that singleness of purpose, devotion, and transparent sincerity as has Mrs Besant. She has sacrificed all that she could. What for? For the freedom of India."

—20 February 1918, *New India*

**LOKAMANYA B. G. TILAK**

"You have adopted India to be your Motherland, you have suffered a great deal for her, and found her almost triumphant. India is united for the commonweal, and all our efforts are directed towards reaching the goal of Swarâj. Our reception may not be as magnificent as from others you may have obtained. But I may assure you it comes from the inmost of our hearts. If India is nearer the goal, it is due to your strenuous efforts, and, if I may be allowed to add also, largely to your internment. Regarding you as an embodiment of our principles and our success, we offer you our welcome and wish you long life and inexhaustible energy."

—15 October 1917, *New India*

**POET RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

Calcutta, Sept 22—Sir Rabindranath Tagore sends to the press a copy of the letter which he has written to a literary friend in England. In the course of the letter he writes "In your letter you seem puzzled at my conduct in sending a message of sympathy to Mrs Besant. I am afraid, compared with your own troubles, it may appear to you too small, but yet sufferings have not lost their keenness for us, and moral problems still remain as the gravest of all problems."

in all parts of the world The constant conflict between the growing demand of the educated community of India for a substantial share in the administration of their country and the spirit of hostility on the part of the Government has given rise, among a considerable number of our young men, to methods of violence, bred of despair and distrust. This has been met by the Government by a thorough policy of repression. In Bengal itself hundreds of men are interned without trial, a great number in unhealthy surroundings, in gaols and in solitary cells, in a few cases driving them to insanity or suicide. The misery that is carried into numerous households is deep and widespread. What I consider to be the worst outcome of this irresponsible policy is the spread of the contagion of hatred against everything western in minds which were free from it. In this crisis the only European who has shared our sorrow, incurring the anger and derision of her countrymen, is Mrs Annie Besant. This was what led me to express my grateful admiration for her noble courage. Possibly there is such a thing as political exigency, just as there may be a place for utter ruthlessness in War, but I pay my homage to those who have faith in ideals and, therefore, are willing to take all other risks except that of weakening the foundation of moral responsibility" (A P 1)

—25 September 1917, New India

## MR. M. K. GANDHI

"Cultivate the great qualities of Dr Besant, namely, firmness, simplicity, self-control, etc. She is one of the greatest orators of the world, because she speaks what she believes and acts according to what she speaks. She has the

courage of her convictions and always puts her words into action Imitate her unflinching determination and simplicity of life Obtain the same strength and indomitable will that she possesses which alone will bring Swarâj India is not fit for Swarâj without these qualities Remove India's chains and then alone will we achieve our goal Religion is interwoven in Dr Besant's life and she has built a bridge between politics and religion Swarâj without religion is of no use It is Dr Besant who has awakened India from her deep slumber and, I pray that she may live long to witness a free India ".

—2 October 1928, *New India*

## DR. BESANT ANSWERS

I do not know what I can say for the over-generous words I could not thank you sufficiently for your good thought of me, but I would pray you not to pitch your thought too high, for then you will expect what none can give I am no incarnation but only a servant of the mighty mother Shakti, who is embodied in no mortal body, but in the immortal body of India, the reflection of the Mother I am only a poor instrument in far mightier hands, and you should no more praise me than you praise the chisel in the hands of the sculptor. The sculptor cuts the marble into some exquisite form of beauty You praise the artist and not the tool It is only then you will be safe from disappointment and you will be fit to follow the leadership not of any mortal leader, but of God and Mother India.

they alone are worthy of your reverence They alone are worthy of your trust For me, I will do my best, but my great leader, Madame H P Blavatsky, said "I am only the window through which the sun comes" Do not make too much of the glass through which the light of the moment happens to come. \

—December 1917

Sometimes I am inclined to think that one ought to be congratulated on the opportunity of working, rather than be thanked for that which it is a privilege to be allowed to perform The real leader is one who inspires others to work, whom we must all look to, to whom our worship should be paid and to be allowed to be, in however small a degree, a Messenger of the Freedom of the Motherland and of her children seems to me a thing to be grateful for

One point I would like to put before you We speak of different people as our leaders Let us remember that the strength of the leader lies in the number of those who strengthen his hands by working for the cause that he represents The leader is rather like the banner of a regiment He is a symbol, and his value depends on the number and courage of the regiment that follow the flag Only as any one of us is able to make articulate that which is in your hearts, only as any one of us may be able to speak out that for which all of you are longing, of which all of you are thinking, only in that measure is his leadership strong, and only in that measure should any leader be trusted To speak out what others are dimly groping after, to proclaim aloud what others are thinking, to say clearly what others

are whispering, that is the true function of the leader. He does not make the movement, it is the movement that makes him and puts him forward as a symbol of the whole of the movement of a nation. Only as we look on leaders in that light, as made by the movement and not as creators of it, shall we see a leader in the true light. Some people object to the movement, saying that an agitator has made it. No man can make a national movement, no man can make an agitation save where the people have a desire expressed in that agitation. And so it follows that the responsibility is really on you rather than on your leaders. They are strong by your strength, they are enduring by your endurance, wise by your wisdom, brave by your courage. It is the nation that is ready to be followed to be redeemed, and you and I are equally pledged to the service of the Motherland.

—16 April 1918, *New India*

We only ask that we may continue to serve you, and struggle side by side with you in this noble battle for freedom [said Dr Besant to the vast assembly of Indians who gathered to ask her blessing after her release from internment] I know that in my own case, and in the case of Mr Arundale, our skins are not of the colour that gives the right to fight, but inasmuch as our Nation has done wrong in the past and denied freedom in the past, inasmuch as the Nation whose signature we bear on our skins has not given liberty here that it was her duty to give, we claim the right to stand for England as she really is and not as Anglo-India has made her. It is well that in this struggle some who were not India-born took part. Did not the father of the Congress wear a white

English skin? Did you not have helper after helper of India's cause who were born in other countries? While our skins are white, we have the Indian heart, the Indian devotion, and with all our hearts we thank you that you allow us to work side by side with you, and though God had not given us the blessing of being India-born, we have won the right to be Indians by the gift of ourselves

—24 September 1917, New India

So long as I can serve India, I shall continue to do so  
I love the Indian people as I love none other, and my heart and my mind have long been laid on the Altar of the Motherland

—22 June 1918, New India

To have the glorious privilege of suffering for India is the crown of a life which has ever striven to stand for Truth and Freedom, I cannot deny in my old age the principles of my youth and maturity Who shall deny to me the right to call myself a Child of the Motherland, when I suffer for her dear sake? I have been one of God's messengers to India, and He has many more, greater and better than I, to send for her redeeming from bondage "When half-Gods go, the Gods arrive"

—30 August 1916, New India

## INDIA IS THE KEYNOTE

In the midst of a Crisis, such as the present, every effort must be made by those who have the inner knowledge to carry through one of the greatest triumphs the world has ever known Today is a supreme moment in the history of the world, and those who truly know must work from every

part of the world to what is a common end Whatever you may be doing for the one, you must dedicate to the all Try to perceive the Great Plan as a whole, however much you may be concentrated upon a particular part of it It is all one Plan, and each part is but a part, however much it may seem to be a whole, all by itself

India is the keynote India is the centre of that great storm which shall usher in a splendid Peace Wherever else you may be working, remember India, think of Her, know Her to be the true Hope of the Nations of the world Think truly about India, without the slightest trace of race or creed or colour prejudice Drive these away, and know India as She is, as She is apart from, above, those who happen to be Her sons for a while They are not India They are not the Mother They are but the children, among Her children Work for India as opportunity offers You hasten the growth of all that is dear to you as you hasten the growth of India No one will be careless of India's welfare, for the sake of the people of India, but far more for the sake of all that India is, the mighty Power She is, as the veritable Holy Land of the World Take away the people of India, and India remains But help the people to become worthy of India

—13 December 1928, *New India*

We are standing on the threshold of a New Age. We are beginning the building of the foundation of the New World—or rather, we are the workers who are gathering together the materials for the building, to help the great Master-Builder in His building that part of the Temple of which the Great Architect has drawn the Plan. The Lord Vaivasvata Manu has His part of the Plan, and the coming world is the sixth department in that Plan of the Fifth Age. We can gather stones, we can bring the lime and the sand, and make the mortar, and prepare the tools for Him who lives in the far-off Himalaya.

—*Presidential Address of 1921*

## *II. India's Age-Old Glories*

We are to seek for the Indian Ideals which flowered into the National Life. Because there were so many in India who ever thought of [the] Supreme, therefore did India flower out into a civilization unrivalled in the depth of its Philosophy, the spirituality of its Religion, and in the perfection of its Dharma of orderly and graded Individual and National Life, expressing as none other has ever done that balance, that equilibrium, which is Yoga, that which saved her, when all the contemporaries of her splendid Nationality have been carried away by Time's tremendous rapids, and scattered as wrecks over the far horizon of the boundless Ocean of the Past. She shares their Past, but they do not share her Future, for not theirs the secret of her immortal Youth

—1925, *Indian Ideals*

## “THE INDIA I KNOW”

WHEN I think of India, I think of her in the greatness of her past, not in the degradation of her present. To me she is in very truth the Holy Land, the land whose great philosophy has been the source of all the philosophies of the Western world, the land whose great religion has been the origin of all religions, the mother of spirituality, the cradle of civilization. I would win your thoughts [to] India unfallen, India as she was in her past, as she shall be in her future—mother once more in days to come, as in the days behind us, of art and of knowledge, mother of spiritual life and of true religion. That is the India I know, that is the India whose polity was built by King-Initiates, whose religion was moulded by Divine Men, the India which even so late as five thousand years ago felt her fields trodden by the feet of Sri Krishna, which even twenty-four centuries ago heard her cities echoing with the sublime morality of the Buddha, the India which later, when her great wars were over, had her poets who in the *Mahabharata* and in the *Ramayana* gave epic poetry to the world greater than that of Greece, dramatists who in later times still left treasures of beauty that the learned in the West are just beginning to appreciate. That is the India which is to me the Holy Land. For those who, though born for this life in a Western land and clad in a

Western body, can yet look back to earlier incarnations in which they drank the milk of spiritual wisdom from the breast of their true mother, they must feel ever the magic of her immemorial past, must dwell ever under the "soo" of her deathless fascination; for they are bound to India by all the sacred memories of their past and with her, too, are bound up all the radiant hopes of their future a future which they know they will share with her who is their true mother in the soul life.

The uniqueness of the Indian civilization consisted in the fact that it was all framed for a spiritual purpose planned to assist spiritual evolution. The State was framed to a spiritual end, the family was built on a spiritual basis, the whole daily life was moulded to conduce to spiritual progress. The social life was similarly organized always for a spiritual end. Take the institution of marriage as you find it amongst the early Aryan people. You find there side by side husband and wife, united in all the greatest things of life the man, the priest of his household, the wife the priestess without whom the daily sacrifices could not be performed, and therefore without whom the duties of the household could not be carried on, for the sacred household fire was only kindled by the bride and bridegroom, and without this there was no household. Every act of life [was] a religious service, the very food was . . . cooked ever as an offering to the Gods, and only secondarily as food for man, hence very largely the abstemiousness of the Hindu nation, all the life of which was to be founded on a spiritual ideal, and not on that of material luxury.

Sleeping she is, and sleeping she will remain, until she turns back to that which inspired the literature of her past, to the philosophy and the religion of her greater days. Those only have in them the hope of her future, as they have in them the essence of her past. That is the hope for India that still burns hidden in some few faithful hearts, that hope of the re-awakening of India for which some still work and pray. Out of that sublime teaching the greatness of her past was evolved. It was when her people thus believed, that India was great. When once more in every Indian household are heard the teachings of the Vedas and the Upanishads, when once more in every Indian household is understood the true meaning of the hymns and of the worship of the Supreme in the hands of the father and the mother of the household—then India will begin to wake from the sleep of centuries, and once more to hold up her head amongst the nations of the world. Her civilization—and this is significant—has lasted. None other has lasted, old as hers is old. She is the most ancient of all the Aryan peoples, the mother of all the sub-races of the Aryan nations. She was old when ancient Egypt was young, very old when Assyria and Chaldæa were born. They have passed away and have left no traces save in their pottery and in their ruins. But India is still a people despite the divisions that degrade her, despite the quarrels that deny the brotherhood of her sons, and she remains with the possibility of a nation because of her past, and because even in her present the ancient form remains into which the spirit may again be poured. If her vessels were broken, then the water of life would be spilt in the pouring, the vessels are there, polluted and

defiled as they are, they can be cleansed, and the water of spiritual life can still be held in them, ay, and shall be held in them in the days to come

—Lecture delivered 6 November 1893,

*The Birth of New India*

## THE MANU—INDIA'S LAW-GIVER

Of all the codes of human life that have ever been given to the world, that code which is known by the name of Manu, the great Law-Giver, is the most orderly and the most perfect in its arrangement.

The Manu as Law-Giver moulds the outer civilization whilst the Teacher gives a religious form suitable for the proposed outer polity. Thus the Manu is the great Law-Giver for the Aryan race and His code is contained in the *Manu Smriti*, the Institutes of Manu.

To the Aryan people the Manu gave its lands, its social polity and organization. He was a Divine King, a mighty Law-Giver, who saw not only with the eyes of matter but with the eyes of spirit and founded a Society on a basis which has lasted for tens of thousands of years and has not yet vanished from the face of the land.

There is nothing more marvellous in ancient history than the way in which every great civilization of the past seems to have been born full-grown and not as an infant. For the earliest civilizations evolved under tutelage and not as western sociologists have imagined, by the pressure of external necessities. They were ruled by Divine Kings, mighty Initiates who gave laws to their nations and built up Society on the model of the family in which the elders ruled

with unquestioned authority and the youngers obeyed with submissive reverence

It was a perfect socialism under autocratic rule. The well-ordered, well-guided family was then the model to which the State conformed. Each man had his status and his duties, and had no need to claim his rights, all that was due to him being paid as a matter of course.

Now the fundamental ideal in Manu's polity for the Aryan race is that of Duty. The fundamental thought of the people of the East has been the thought embodied in that one word Dharma (Duty). Every man has his Duty. But what does Duty mean? It means the obligations into which every man is born, the obligations which surround him from the moment of his birth. The obligations to the family, the obligations to the community, the obligations to the nation—these are the duties into which every human being comes by the gateway of birth. It is not an arbitrary thing but a natural one. It is not a thing which is created, but it is a thing which comes out of the long course of evolution.

Out of that fundamental idea of Duty comes the thought that the first thing in human life which makes it possible is the fact that that obligation is recognized and righteously discharged. Nothing is said about the rights of the individual, for each obtains his rights when all around him discharge their several duties.

### *The Four Great Functions*

The Manu of the Fifth Race based His social organization of the eldest sub-race on a recognition of types known as the Caste System. He guided the souls highly evolved

in knowledge and dispassion to take birth as teachers and priests, those highly evolved in power as kings and warriors, others as merchants and traders, and others as artisans, labourers and servants. The caste system was based entirely on the ideal of Duty—the Duty of the learned to teach, the Duty of the strong to protect, the Duty of the organizer and the distributor of goods to distribute them, and the Duty of the producer to produce. So that we have four great functions coming out in the National life—the Duty of the teacher, the Duty of the protector, the Duty of the organizer and distributor, and the Duty of the producer of wealth.

Today we need to hold up again the old ideal, not to force any man to follow it, if he does not see it to be admirable. When we are thus able to re-form a caste of teachers, a caste of legislators and administrators of justice, a caste of those who organize industry and accumulate wealth, a class of manual labourers who follow a particular craft, or a particular art which is needed for the welfare of the people—all equally honourable and equally necessary, and all equally essential to the nation's welfare, and when the old idea of duty returns and each knows his duty and does it, then shall we again make the golden age, and a happier day shall break upon our earth. For this is what the West is looking for today. It realizes its own turmoil. It realizes its own dislocation. It realizes that constant struggle cannot be the natural and the fitting state of man. It is gradually despairing of the feasibility of its methods, and is looking elsewhere for light. Where should the light come from? From the East, where the Sun

is ever shining, where the laws of the Great Law-Giver were given to all His Aryan children, not only to those who settled in India, but to those who wandered Westward and lost their way to their father's home

—October 1917, *The Ancient Indian Ideal of Duty*

## THE FOUNDATION OF THE STATE

Manu's laws are concerned with the inhabitants of a kingdom, their relationships, their offices, their functions, their duties, etc. The Family is the unit "To be mothers were women created and to be fathers men", "Let mutual fidelity continue until death, this may be considered as the summary of the highest law for husband and wife" "He only is a perfect man who consists of his wife, himself, and his offspring" The husband is declared to be one with the wife"

To Manu we owe the luminous idea that all human societies, like a family, consist of elders, equals, and youngers, to each of whom special duties should be rendered, reverence to the elders, friendship to the equals, protection to the youngers, and on the due discharge of these, the happiness of all States depends The State should be founded on the Family, and State obligations are enlarged family obligations The profound principle which emerges from this fundamental idea that man only becomes man in the family, that Man, the truly *human* being, is not a separate man, but a husband-wife-child, raises Duty above Rights, obligations above claims, it substitutes mutual helpfulness for competition, the law of sacrifice for the law of the struggle for existence It is the recognition that man is a

social, not an isolated being, and that the State should be moulded in accordance with this natural law      Modern science reinforced [the] ancient teaching, and thus gave birth to Socialism ..

Only in the woman is the old ideal preserved, and her utter sacrifice to husband and son is apt to increase masculine selfishness    None the less, in her self-sacrifice lies the salvation of India    The future welfare of the Indian State depends on the re-establishment of the old ideal of the Family, with its mutual sacrifice, and mutual service, and mutual helpfulness, conditioned, in their form not in their essence, by the "elder, equal, and younger"

—1919, *Lectures on Political Science*

## SELF-GOVERNING INDIA

If you go into Indian history at all, you will at once realize that the Nation that built up that history so many thousands of years ago, is a Nation with a typical life of its own    It is capable of steady and constant evolution today    You would realize that so far from the idea of Self-Government being a new idea, which has grown out of contact with Great Britain, which has gradually been adopted by the educated Indians because they have studied English History—you would find, on the contrary, that India was one of the most Self-Governing countries in the world, and that there still remains in village traditions in India the memory of a time when the people truly governed themselves    And if you study that, not only in the village communal life, but if you study the building up from the village to the ten villages, from the ten villages to the hundred villages, and so on,

grade after grade, until you come to the royal power, you would see in that the image of a Nation that was not only capable of Self-Government but that exercised Self-Government, you would realize that Kingship in India, powerful as it was, was powerful because the King was frequently elected by the people, because no great step was taken without the popular approval, because round the King there stood a Council, representing the various grades in the community over which the King was ruling. And you find as you read those old stories that, while the King was mighty, he was the King of a Free State, and you begin to realize that a great deal of the nonsense talked in modern times about India's incapacity for Self-Government is nonsense, and grows out of the ignorance of the people, and their utter lack of acquaintance with the past of their own great Nationality.

Moreover, if you study that history, you would find that customs had changed in the most extraordinary way. You would find, when you came to deal with the question of foreign travel, that India was once a great commercial country, manufacturing her own products, and sending them out in her own ships over the whole of the then known world, you would find that there was a great trade carried on with Europe along the borders of the Mediterranean, you would find your sailors sailing over the seas of the then known world, and carrying the products of Indian handicrafts over the whole of that then known civilized world.

—Lecture delivered 1914, *The Birth of New India*

## DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

Lord Olivier falls into the common error of thinking that the West had to teach democracy to India. "Centuries of working in Europe and America?" But surely the earliest date in America is the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and in England it is not yet a century old, while democracy is "natural to India." "The East is the parent of municipalities." The "village republics" kept India prosperous, wealthy and free literally for millennia, and lasted up to 1816 with "a school in every village," as Sir Thomas Munro told the House of Commons in 1813. Sir Henry Maine has pointed out these Self-Governing institutions and de Tocqueville saw in the similar local organizations in the American Colonies the surest foundation of National Liberty. India's local Governments kept India rich and strong, while Kings and Emperors played about at the top from time to time, and had their little wars while the peasants and craftsmen worked in peace. India wishes to build her own Constitution on the sure foundations of her past, and not to be given a bad copy of British democracy, evolved after feudalism and baronial and royal tyrannies. India kept her Kings in much better order than England did, and the Councils dethroned them when they became too troublesome. As Kautilya said in the fourth century B.C., "a King without a Council was like a cart with one wheel." You can only tell what India can be when you know what India has been in the past.

—6 March 1924, New India

## RUSSIA AND INDIA—A COMPARISON

Dr Besant, commenting on an article of the above title, states

The writer, from a study of Autocracy followed by anarchy in Russia, and from the cant view of India accepted in the West, considers that India needs an autocracy, and that its destruction would be followed by anarchy here. He ignores the fact that Russia is in her first youth, and is in the process of building up a Nation out of very diverse constituents, not yet amalgamated. Her civilization has been imposed on her and is moulded on western ideas, alien to the various eastern and semi-eastern tribes which have been conquered but not assimilated. Remove this, and you are face to face with tribes of many types, incapable of aught save tribal order. "Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar" is true.

What has such an embryonic Nation, with a veneer of alien civilization, to offer as matter for "a comparison" with India, the oldest of living civilizations?

Can these tribes of Eastern Europe and of Asia be compared with the Empires of the Pandavas, of Chandragupta, of Asoka, of the Mughals, to name but four out of the mighty Empires and Kingdoms that have risen and fallen in India during five thousand years? Are the tribal organizations to be compared with that of the many-aspected civilization which produced the Dharmashastras, the Arthashastras, the Philosophies, the Sciences, the Metaphysics, the Epics, the Dramas of India, to say nothing of the sublime Spirituality which gave the Upanishads to a wondering world? The West has dug at eastern sources for her limited supply of knowledge, and as to her civilization, when have any wars in India

spread the wide-stretching devastation, or shown the ghastly calculated cruelties we see in the Europe of today? India had hospitals many centuries before the West had any, but she has never produced men like the Christian savages who begged that they might have their religious processions undisturbed, while they bombed the churches and the hospitals of their fellow-believers, whelming the wounded, the nurses, the doctors, in one red rain with their bombs

On the assumption that Russia and India are both child Nations, India being "more divided, less virile, and far less socially advanced than Russia," while she "has been infinitely more fortunate than Russia in having honest, capable and benevolent rulers" in her British officers, our writer considers that the disappearance of the British oligarchy would be a greater misfortune to India than the disappearance of the Tsardom to Russia "Beyond all other countries, India is the land of one-man rule" "In the absence of official control, Municipal Government is apt to become a scandal and a farce unless there is one honest man to lead it" Yet historians trace to her village communities and municipalities the inception of the free institutions of the West But what is history in the face of the overweening insular conceit of the writer? Indians, it seems, have not "yet shown any marked capacity for managing their own affairs" in Municipalities, because they are hampered by officials there, but they surely show very great capacity in Indian States, the only places in which they are allowed to show it

—14 June 1918, New India

## INDIA'S GLORIOUS CULTURAL TRADITIONS<sup>1</sup>

Lift your eyes to the Universities born on the Indian soil, breathing the Indian air, nourished by Indian traditions

Set the example of the Ashramas and Sangams of the Hindu, the Viharas of the Buddhist, the Madrasahs of the Muslims . . .

Wander with me for a short space in the forests of the Ashramas, the exquisite gardens of the Viharas, and let us see whether they do not present something that we may learn to utilize.

### THREE CULTURAL HERITAGES

- I Vaidic or Hindu (dominant in the ancient period)
- II Buddhistic (dominant in the middle period from fifth century B C to A D eleventh century)
- III Islamic (dominant in modern period to A D nineteenth century)

#### *Not Mutually Exclusive*

These great ages are not mutually exclusive, for Takshashila, the most ancient of the Hindu universities, lasted until its destruction in A D 455 Hindus went to Buddhist monasteries and universities and Buddhists learned from Brâhma Sages One king might be a Buddhist and his son an

<sup>1</sup> All quotations that follow, unless otherwise credited, are from Dr Annie Besant's famous Convocation Address to the University of Mysore, delivered on 29 October 1924, and from *India Bond or Free?* 1926, 1st Ed

orthodox Hindus. Hindu Emperors loaded Buddhist monasteries with rich gifts. Every court had learned men belonging to both religions.

### *Learning Greatly Honoured*

In India the greatest and wisest of her Monarchs found in the promotion of learning their nob'est and most beneficent achievement, and saw in the foundation of a University the most enduring memorial of their thrones. Learning in India has ever been regarded as greater than wealth and rank. The first of wisdom as more worthy of reverence than the jewelled diadem of Kings.

### *Nature the Keynote*

In the first two periods the Forest was the fountain-head of civilization. "There trees and plants, rivers and lakes had ample opportunity to live in close relationship with men. In these forests, though there was human society there was no josting. The Indian mind it rendered all the brighter. The current of civ'zation that flowed from its forests inundated the whole of India." (Rabindranath Tagore)

Even after the forest period, Indian Universities were ever built in scenes of natural beauty, surrounded by lovely gardens, fragrant with blossoms and shady with trees, surrounded by a high wall, with guarded gates whereat the "entrance examination" was actually conducted. The site of an insignificant village may sometimes be selected because of its beauty.

### *Who Became Cultured?*

Culture was an innate part of the life of the village, because education in literature and arts and crafts was centred in the Temple and its affiliated schools

The Universities were attended by the "twice-born," monarchs, nobles, leaders of the great merchant community, who carried their knowledge back to the village hearts of India. Some Universities held from 8,000 to 10,000 students

The title *Kulapati* was given to him "who had fed, housed and taught 10,000 students"

The sons of poor men earned their tuition by service to the University, or promised to pay their fees later. Some universities were so highly endowed that all tuition and living fees were waived

Women had opportunities for attaining the highest cultural honours. One Ramachandramha, a poetess of extraordinary powers who could compose with equal facility in eight languages, was accorded the honour of *Kanaka-Ratna Abhisheka* (a bath in gold and gems), and by Court assent she occupied the position of "Emperor of Learning"

### *Subjects of the Curricula*

There were Scriptures of Literature, Science, Arts and Crafts, and the practice of Yoga. Much emphasis was laid on the study of medicine and law

## I THE ANCIENT OR HINDU (VAIDIC) AGE

Centred in Forest

Discipline—Raja Yoga

*Method*—Meditation on a single aphorism until an understanding was reached, the goal being the stimulation of the originality and creative powers of the pupils rather than the injection of well-digested facts

Not a single pie could the student retain in the great University of Takshashila, thus putting all students on a basis of common democracy

### *Subjects Taught*

The supreme literature—the *Upanishads* and the *Brahma Sutras*

All subjects taught had as the ultimate goal—the release of the Self

For example, the Classical Dance of India—Bharata Natya—was given with its wealth of symbolism to the Rishi Bharata as another Veda which could be easily understood by all

As early as the Epic Age, their worship of the great Planetary Devas brought to their discovery the position of the solstitial points and other important astronomical phenomena, which, without the aid of the modern instruments, they fixed to an astonishingly accurate degree

The orientation to Brahma Vidya or the Supreme Wisdom was evidenced in a dialogue between the Rishi Narada and the Lord Sanat Kumāra.

“O Lord, I have read the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda, fourth the Atharveda, fifth the Itihasa and Purana, Grammar Rituals, the Science of Numbers Physics, Chronology, Logic, Polity, Technology, the Sciences cognate to the

Vedas, the Science of Bhûtas, Archery, Astronomy, the Science of Antidotes and the Fine Arts (said by Sri Sankaracharya to be the Science of making essences, dancing, singing, music, architecture, painting, etc ) ”

The Lord replied “All these that you have learnt are merely nominal ” (*Chhandogyopanishad*)

### *Famous Institutions of Learning*

Takshashila, the most ancient Northern University near Rawalpindi, destroyed by the White Huns in A D 455  
Nadiya, near Calcutta, existing as late as 1908

The ancient South Indian Sangams

the First Sangam of Madura lasting 16,149 years,  
the Second—3,700 years,  
the Third—1,850 years,

were examining bodies of culture, whose approval “ set the seal of authority on the works presented,” writes Dr S Krishnaswami Aiyangar All aspired to the dignity of having their creative output marked as “ Sangam works ” The Rishi Agastya was a member of the First and Second Sangams, and through His authoritative grammar of the Age—Agattiyam—and His other works on all the great sciences and arts, He became the “ Father of Tamil Civilization ”

## II THE MIDDLE OR BUDDHIST AGE

Centred in Garden Monasteries and Universities

Discipline—Monastical (Gnana Yoga—The Yoga of Wisdom),

Method—Meditation, Study, and Discussion

### *Subjects Taught*

Brilliant results were achieved in Astronomy in this age. Its curricula included Logic, Grammar, Philosophy and Metaphysics, History, Arithmetic, Geometry, Samskrit, Pali, Music, and Tantrik Medicine. The sacred books of all religions were studied.

### *Famous Institutions of Learning*

Nâlandâ, on the bank of Gângâ, to the south-east of Pataliputra (now Patna) and north of Râjagrîha, was built by four successive Kings, being completed by King Bâditya in the fifth century A.D. on the spot chosen by Arya Deva at the behest of his Guru Nâgârjuna in A.D. 300.

Here all the ten thousand Buddhist monks, novices and other students were lodged and supplied with every necessity. Their power of debate and discussion was famed everywhere. Students travelled to Nâlandâ for postgraduate instruction not only from all parts of Asia but from Europe as well.

This Monastery was set in an exquisitely beautiful garden. "All around pools of translucent water shone with the pearls of the blue lotus, here and there the lovely kanaka trees hung between them. The pavilions had beams resplendent with all the colours of the rainbow, rafters richly carved and roofs covered with glazed tiles of brilliant colours, which multiplied themselves by reflection," writes Hiouen-Tsang who visited the monastery A.D. 629-45.

Royal University of Vikramasila, founded by King Dharmapala of Gauda in the eighth century A.D. on the bank of Gângâ, near Bhagalpur, flourished for four centuries and

was destroyed with those of Nâlandâ and Odantapuri. In 1203 the final centres of Buddhist culture were wiped out by the Muslim Invasion.

### III ISLAMIC CULTURE, THE MODERN AGE

Muhammad, the great Prophet of Arabia, set the ink of the scholar above the blood of the martyr, and it is well known that the torch of Science was carried aloft by Islam during the period of the dark ages of Europe. The destruction of the Universities and Temple schools by even the greatest fanatics of the tenth century was due to the fact that the followers of the Prophet abhorred images and image-worshippers, though themselves revering learning.

Sultans were ardent patrons of learning. Writes Sultan Firuz (1341-88) • "I built many Masjids, Colleges, and Monasteries that the learned and the elders, the devout and the holy, might worship God in these edifices and aid the kind builder by their prayers. The digging of canals, the planting of trees, and the endowing with lands are in accordance with the directions of the Law."

In the height of the Islamic period great toleration for all religions was shown. Libraries of Hindu Shastras were translated by Hindu Pandits for the good of all, the mingling of the cultures developing Hindustani. Akbar's reign (A.D. 1566-1605) is especially marked for its toleration. "Sufis, doctors, preachers, lawyers, Sunnis, Shias, Brâhmanas, Jains, Buddhists, Charbakas, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and learned men of every belief" argued on "profound points of science, the curiosities of history, the wonders of nature."

Centred in the Imperial Courts  
Method—Study and Discussion

*Subjects Taught:*

Akbar improved the gradation of the subjects taught, the Curriculum being.

Morality, Arithmetic, Accounts, Agriculture, Geometry, Longimetry, Astronomy, Geomancy, Economics, the Art of Government, Physics, Logic, Natural Philosophy, Abstract Mathematics, Divinity and History—a graded order from the study of Righteousness to Divinity and Manhood. Progress in the Arts and Crafts—music, painting, architecture—was very noted in Akbar's reign.

*Famous Institutions of Learning*

The world-renowned Madrasahs, such as that at Firazabad, the Firuz-Shahi Madrasah, and the Qudam Sharif Madrasah, were housed in very beautiful and spacious buildings in which rich colour and ornamentation were evident everywhere. Education and student maintenance were State-endowed. Universities were centres of bounty and service to the community.

WHITHER INDIA'S GLORIOUS CULTURAL TRADITIONS?

*What fed these great Universities of India's Past?*

The learning acquired in the village schools in which education began at five or six and was continued in its literary aspect to sixteen, at which time the student either went to the University, or became apprenticed to village craftsmen and agriculturists.

### *Why Has Indian Education Perished?*

Indian education did not die when the White Huns destroyed the great University of Takshashila in A D 455

Indian education did not die when the Muslims with their horror of images destroyed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries both Hindu and Buddhist Universities that contained them

Indian education did not die in these two great destructions, because universities might come and go, but the village system, the roots and trunk still lived

Indian education was not meant to die when Britain came to India, for the design which has been partially fulfilled was that the youngest son should disseminate far and wide the glory of the Mother of the Nations of the world

Indian education perished only when the Village System with its industries, its common ownership in land, and co-operative endeavours, its education in the mother-tongues, was destroyed

### *The Renaissance*

Indian education can only live when it is again rooted in the very soil of the Indian Village. Restore the Village Panchayat or small Republic—that truest of all democracies, give back to the village its land, and its power to deal with its own internal problems, and again will there grow up generations of young Indians trained in an education of the hand, the heart, and the head, through which will be expressed the heritage of the Motherland



the almost complete extinction of spiritual fire, yet remains the one country in the world where to put the Soul first, high above all material interests, is not regarded as a madness, the one country where spirituality still hovers in the very atmosphere, and where external surroundings help the Soul to rise instead of fettering it to earth

But apart from its lofty spirituality, there is another aspect of the Aryan life which, at the present time, is of pressing importance. The Aryan type was one of unbending rectitude, of high morality, and those who would fain see Aryan spirituality again lift its head in the future, will do well to turn their attention now to Aryan virtues, and to try and revive these in the life of the householder

Out of the spirituality grew reverence to parents, teachers, and elders. Reverence to the gods translated itself in the family and social life into reverence for the parents, who gave and nourished the physical life, for the teacher who gave and nourished the inner life—the second birth—for the aged, whose ripe wisdom served as guide and who handed on the ancient traditions

From reverence sprang courtesy, respecting others and self-respecting, the gracious courtesy which has stamped itself on the bearing of all classes and, even yet, serves as a pattern of the manners that “are not idle,” and that make the wheels of life run smoothly. Then came hospitality, the guest to be honoured as a God, hospitality freehanded and generous-minded, a duty ungrudgingly done, and its sister, charity, so that none might starve while others had enough, not yielded as a legal dole but given gladly, for the householder was the steward of the nation and none of the

nation's children must go unfed Reverence, courtesy, hospitality, charity, these were the social virtues of the Aryan householder that rendered him so gracious a type

But these would not have availed to build the Aryan character, lovely as they are, had there not been laid as a foundation, the bed-rock of Truth. Never might Aryan utter a lie, never might Aryan lips be stained with falsehood. Rigid fidelity to the pledged word, undeviating accuracy, these were taught by sacred precept, by lofty example, and this supreme virtue of Truth—without which all else must wither and perish—so wrought itself into the life of the nation that even now some Indian methods remind us of a time when an Aryan's word was his bond. Would that every Aryan boy would make a vow in his heart to keep truth unstained, for he would by keeping truth do more to serve the nation than if he shone out as a brilliant light in the scholastic, legal, or political worlds!

Courage walks hand-in-hand with truth, and fearlessness was a distinguishing characteristic of the Aryan type, fearlessness, which has tenderness for its other aspect, for only those who hurt none need fear none. Pain inflicted is a prophecy of future pain to be endured, for the Great Law swings unerringly, and to every act of wrong brings its meed of pain. Therefore is harmlessness the highest Dharma, and therefore read we of "the fearless Brahman."

If India is again to hold up her head among nations India's younger children must begin to lay the foundation in their own lives, of the Aryan type of character. The virtues

that I have mentioned were its most pronounced attributes and the revival of these among the Aryan youth would presage the rebuilding of the Nation. Character makes destiny, and Indian destiny depends on Indian character. Here is work for the young whose hearts burn with love for the Motherland, for on the altar of pure morality alone can fall the fire from Heaven which changes the fuel of aspiration into spiritual flame.

—Article written 9 December 1896, *India*

## INDIA—THE IMPERISHABLE

India is a continuum, and her Aryan civilization an unbroken whole. There are invasions and conquests, periods of strength and weakness, of unity and division, in her aeonian story. But she is always India, always Aryan the MOTHER Imperishable, who has borne uncounted millions from her womb, but at whose own birth no historian can guess, whose death no prophet can foretell. And this it is well to remember in our judgments of today. With an admitted history of nearly 5,000 years, from the commerce between India and Babylon and the proofs of high civilization and wealth then existing, with an admitted literature of least 7,000 years, the period of English rule in India, barely a century and a half, is microscopically small, a tiny ripple on her ocean. Invasions flow and ebb, conquerors come and go, India assimilates what is left of them, is the richer for them, and remains herself. She did without England for millennia, and flourished amazingly, she could do without England for millennia to come, but the two need each other, and will be the better for each other in

the near future, and India desires to be linked with England in that future, but on a footing of perfect equality, and on none other

—1915, *A Bird's Eye View of India's Past as the Foundation for India's Future*

## HER NATIONHOOD

What is it that makes a Nation? It is, as with other individuals, a fragment of God Himself, a Jivatma, a living Self, with innate qualities which gradually appear and form its Character. Contrast the Indian and the Englishman, and you will see the difference in the National Character—the Indian, spiritual, courteous, polished, keenly intellectual, inclined to philosophy and poetry, with an acute sense of duty, of obligation, to his surroundings, the Englishman, somewhat blunt and abrupt, strong mentality, scientific and practical, public-spirited. Climate, environment, social customs, all act on physical peculiarities, and through them on character also. A Nation is distinctly an Individual with a Character, and that character depends on the nature of the Spirit at its core, and its gradual unfolding to play its part in humanity as a whole. It draws into itself and assimilates all that is congruous with its inner Self, its Spirit, and it is the Spirit that unites, that harmonizes, that evolves the Nationality which embodies it. Anything special may go, only mutilating the National body, but if all goes, the Spirit must find another home.

If India still survives all who were her contemporaries five thousand years ago, it is because the same Spirit lives in her National body as lived in it then, she has passed

through many valleys of humiliation, but never has she entered the valley of the shadow of death, she has been invaded, and has assimilated her invaders, her ethnic type, the Aryan, still survives in a minority, though she has wrought into it many others, her ancient language is still living, although it has given birth to many dialects which have become great languages, her Governments have changed their forms, and she has passed through periods of local, but only local, anarchy, and today she is renewing her youth like the phoenix, and from the pyre of temporary subjection she is arising, the same Nation, but purified, enriched, to a future greater than her past

—1918, *Lectures on Political Science*

## HER BIRTHRIGHT

To India root-stock of the mighty Aryan Race, were committed those treasures of spiritual wisdom which are held by her for the healing of the Nations, and also the fundamental principles of man in Society, on which alone can be built a civilization which shall endure. She has vindicated her birthright by her long existence as a Nation, contemporary with Babylon the Mighty, she is yet alive and pulsing with new life today. Not in tombs is India to be sought, but in the full glare of modern life

Nor in mere length of existence is her title to glory, but in the fulfilled treasures of her splendid Past, she was a wealthy trader, sending her ships over the seas, heavy-laden with precious cargo, two thousand years before Hiram of Tyre sent to Solomon his cedar trees, and fir trees, and gold, so well cared-for and well irrigated were her lands,

that her villagers raised on them two and sometimes three crops a year, mighty were her warriors, her kings, her statesmen, her republics, kingdoms and empires, and Alexander felt the strength of her free citizens when he was turned back, the ever-victorious, and found the end of his conquests in that strength

World-famous are not only her philosophers, from whom Plato and Pythagoras sought to learn their wisdom, but also her poets and her dramatists, her artists and her craftsmen, her astronomers, her mathematicians, her architects

Surely India, with such a past, has some message for the modern world, some spiritual inspiration, some principles of civic polity, which are the secret of her long-continued life

## A TOMORROW OF UNRIVALLED GLORY

*Under the title of "Educative Work for Home Rule," Dr Besant's sets forth the greatness of India and her ancient institutions. In the sixth article of this remarkable series, 13 February 1917, "New India," she says*

The general impression of India given by such a survey as is afforded by the *Arthashastra* is of a vast country, presenting many varieties of forms of government, making many experiments, discussing with keen interest many political problems, a country throbbing with life and thought, wealthy, happy, free, and prosperous. We realize that her mighty spiritual literature her philosophy, her epics, grew out of a soil rich in civilization, material and intellectual, as well as spiritual; that India was a land, oldest of living Nations, whose splendid yesterday promises a tomorrow of unrivalled glory

# *III. India's Awakening*

THE WARRIOR SOUNDS A CLARION CALL

## ANNIE BESANT THE AWAKENER

"In 1897, prominent long before the Home Rule movement was started, hers was one of the very first voices raised to plead the cause of the brown race as against the white. If one contribution has been made by her more noteworthy and more important than another, it is that assertion of the equality of human rights, the rousing of the self-respect of our race, and constant reiteration of the principle, not for the purpose of elevating us temporarily to a sense of false security or false arrogance, but to evolve political evolution in this country.

"I am not one of those who are unaware of the services done by the Congress and by the Congress leaders, but consider what has been done in the last few years—the wave of activity galvanic activity that has run through the country and aroused the self-respect, aspirations, and ideal of the people. To whom is all that due? It is due to Mrs Besant who scorning leisure and ease and travails and turmoils and position has transcended the difficulties of race that is not ours, of a breeding that is not ours, of a culture that has become hers. She is one of us, she is Indian more than any of us, and it is to that Indian quality in her you owe the galvanic activity you see around you whether in politics social service or educational work I pay my tribute to her on that account.

—14 December 1918, (Sir) C P Ramaswamy Aiyar

## TO AROUSE THE INDIAN WILL

IT is said—I know truly—that the Indian will has been asleep and has not roused itself to carry out its thought, but it also was said by a keen English observer that the reason why the Indian will is sleeping is that there is nothing great enough to rouse it into life, and that is true, for as long as you put before India jewels and gold, rank and titles, those cannot stir the Indian will to rouse itself and carry out that wish, but today there is before India an ideal to rouse that will into mightiest power, because it is the ideal of a mighty Nation that has claimed to itself its own strength to reign. We have been told that, where that will is present, it must achieve its victory, and it is a dream that has inspired and aroused the will—the dream of India one and indivisible, the dream of India mighty among the Nations of the earth once more. The dreamers have seen it and you shall achieve it.

—1917, New India

## AT THIS VITAL MOMENT

For many long years past I have urged on you, and on those like you in all parts of India, the necessity of a spiritual awakening before the awakening of a material prosperity became possible. In the past I have sometimes traced

for you the steps of India's descent, how from the time of her great spirituality, when the life of the Spirit was seen as the sun in the heavens, how from that time downwards, with the decay of spirituality, went also the decay of the desirable things. And I remember how often I have pressed upon you how first there came the lessening of the spiritual life, then the decay of the original side of intellectual thought, of the creative intelligence, and only when those had gone far down into the twilight, came the slow decay of material prosperity. The awakening, the reviving, of Indian life must follow the order in which the descent has gone. First of all, the reviving of true spirituality, of true religion, of the vital understanding of the profoundest truths of all existence, then, after that had made its way to an appreciable extent, must come the training, the culture, the guidance of the intelligence, so that a wisely planned and wisely guided education might train the future workers of the land. I remember saying to you that when the spiritual life has again become potent, when the educational life has again become pervasive, then only can material prosperity safely return.

In a rightly directed education lies the only way of training for the Motherland citizens who will be worthy of her past and therefore capable of building her future, out of that will arise all the varied activities of a full and rich national life, and we shall see the nation, which India never yet has been, but which India shall be in the days that are dawning.

To our eyes, looking with purblind vision, we should sometimes be almost inclined to say that events are travelling in

India a little more rapidly than is well. For we need for the wise guiding of a material movement men trained from boyhood in religion and in true wisdom, so that the brain may be balanced and calm, the hands strong and steady, for the moment you touch the popular mind and the popular heart you awaken forces that are apt to go beyond the control of wisdom, and it needs a nucleus of wise and steady thinkers in order that a popular movement may find its way aright.

Let us, then, at this moment of immense importance to India's future, consider what ought to be the line most wisely to be followed in the great rush which is coming upon us.

We know that India's Deva-King stands high above the nation and works out, millennium after millennium, the parts which are given to Him for His nation to play in the world's history, these parts have outlined the nation's story through all the difficulties, the dangers, the humiliations of the past. First of all, in order that India might again take her place amongst the nations of the world, mightier even than in the past—a glorious past—there came the spiritual messengers, the messengers who were to revive the varied religions of the land.

—Lecture delivered 1910, *The Birth of New India*

## THE ROOTS OF INDIA'S NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Before the great National movement, we had a great religious movement, paving the way for more external manifestations. You may go back to the roots of this National movement to those days of Raja Ram Mohun Roy, who was

the first great modern Indian leader to arouse the Nation to a sense of the greatness of its past and of the possibilities of its future. He created the Brahma Samâj which later split into two movements, one rather more tending to the lines of western thought than the other. Then there was the Arya Samâj where the great Indian teacher, Dayanand Sarasvati, threw the Nation back upon the Vedas, and proclaimed the greatness of the eastern civilization. After that movement came The Theosophical Society, which proclaimed that in the East was the fountain of religious thought and that the great teachers of religion had found in the East their birthplace, and then to complete that cycle of religious evolution, you had the Ramakrishna Mission, with its fiery apostle, Swami Vivekananda, who was great as a religious teacher but no less great as patriot, who struck the note of Indian manhood, of Indian pride, and inspired especially the youth of India to accept self-sacrifice for the sake of the Motherland. Even so hostile a critic as Sir Valentine Chirol honoured me with the statement that when a European woman came to India and said that the West had nothing to teach of religion to the East, she led the people of India to believe that India was superior to Europe, and so even those who are hostile to Indian Nationality confess that in religion lies its root, confess that the Nation was reborn in the bosom of its religion, and that the roots of Nationality are struck deep into the heart of man.

—10 February 1917, *New India*

# HOW ANNIE BESANT WROUGHT FOR INDIA'S FREEDOM

[The following articles of this Section—India's Awakening—are taken from the magnificent appeals Dr Besant made both to India and Britain alike to arouse themselves to the splendid destiny that awaited them as a World-Commonwealth of the East and the West. Her ringing Clarion-Call awoke India from the sleep of centuries. Her cry for Justice to India made every true Briton yearn to set the Motherland free. If today we here in India have the definite pledge of Self-Determination after the War, such as it is, we can only give homage to her who strove with her heart's blood and her soul's will for India's right to Self-Expression.]

## ON LIBERTY

I crave for every man, whatever be his creed, that his freedom of conscience be held sacred. I ask for every man, whatever be his belief, that he shall not suffer, in civil matters, for his faith or for his want of faith. I demand for every man, whatever be his opinions, that he shall be able to speak out with honest frankness the results of honest thought, without forfeiting his rights as citizen, without destroying his social position, and without troubling his domestic peace.

Liberty is immortal and eternal, and her triumph is sure, however it may be delayed, and hers is also the triumph of tomorrow if only we who adore her, if only we can be true to ourselves and to each other. But they who love

her must work for her, as well as worship her, for labour is the only prayer to Liberty, and devotion the only praise

—1883, *Civil and Religious Liberty*

I have . learned much of the Divine Plan, and know that Victory is sure, however dark the passing clouds that veil the Sun As surely as no thickness of earth-born clouds can put out the Sun, so surely can no folly and no crime put out Liberty, though they may delay for a while its rays from falling upon a portion of the globe

—4 November 1925, *New India*

## WHO IS A PATRIOT?

What does a patriot mean? It means a man who realizes his own country and who loves that country above all else on earth The patriot is not a man who looks to another country as though it was the centre of the Universe He must look to his own country, his own people, those who are born on the land on which he himself was born, and the only Indian patriot is the man who loves India first and foremost above every other country The first thing a man must be loyal to is his own country

I would ask you to realize that life without liberty is a poor and contemptible thing But until a man respects himself, until he will not bear an insult, until he is able to hold up his head in the air and declare that he is a man equal to other men on the earth—without such freedom there cannot be greatness either of aspirations or of achievement And so I would urge on you to think of liberty day after day, meditate on her, long for her, feel her absence as you would feel the absence of the one dearest to you If

all the world, that your heart may ever be aching since that liberty is not yours You should realize that liberty is the one great Devi without whom no country is worth the name of a Nation and, when you feel that, you will have to cry out for it, and then you will be seen by the world as worthy of the freedom you are demanding and liberty will come to your arms

—17 June 1918, *New India*

## A MESSAGE TO INDIA

*From the President of the Indian National Congress to the People of India*

Brothers and Sisters—We are living in a time when great changes are being made all over the world And, as a result, methods are adopted which have the heroic simplicity and directness of the elder times Our Viceroy, the Representative of our beloved King-Emperor, remembering his Sovereign's words that sympathy was lacking in the Indian administration, has come out from his aloof isolation, and, like an ancient King, is travelling round these immense dominions, to discover for himself what the people want And with him comes from far-off Britain a special Messenger from the Throne itself, one of His Majesty's Ministers, to bring us the Emperor's Love and Justice Love, that shall win us to forget what we have suffered, Justice, that shall offer to us the Rights which other Peoples have had to wrench by force from the fast-closed fists of Sovereigns less wise, and less observant of the high Dharma of a Nation's Ruler

What does this Justice mean to the highly educated classes of the Indian people? It means that they will have

power placed in their hands to carry out the resolutions which they have been passing in the National Congress for three-and-thirty years. They will pass an Elementary Education Bill which, in the words of the Japanese Emperor, will leave no ignorant family in a village no ignorant member in a family. They will so deal with the tariffs that the bounties given exclusively to India by Nature will bring to her from foreign Nations the wealth she needs to improve her own people for the advantages given by Nature should fall back upon the people as fertilizing rain on the parched field. They will abolish the coercive legislation which has been invented to crush out expressions of righteous discontent, discontent due to the wrong methods and mistakes inevitable under the rule of a foreign bureaucracy, alien in language, customs, habits, from the people whom they rule. To the highly educated classes, Justice means heavy responsibility and strenuous exertion, with the joy of rendering happy and prosperous the people from whom they have sprung the relatives in hundreds of thousands of villages in which their ancient families have lived for uncounted generations. "Born of the people, how should they not serve the people?" for India has no classes separated from each other by dividing gulfs, such as exist in the West between the noble in the castle and the peasant in the cottage.

What does Justice mean to the active, cut-of-door class, the class that, if poor, now goes into the Army and the Police, or, if noble, would go into them if they offered a career to Indians, the 'reborn warrior class, that is restless

and discontented, because its surging energies seek action ? To them, often now the "naughty boys" of families, it opens up a career suited to them, in an Indian Army and Navy and Police, composed of Indians and officered by Indians, in which the bravest and the best disciplined, showing powers of leadership, shall have an open road to the highest posts of command, the very qualities which now cause disturbance being yoked to service of the Motherland, her protectors against foreign aggression, her guardians against disorder within

What does Justice mean to the merchant class ? It means markets in which wealth shall repay exertion, in which Lakshmi Devi, the Angel of Plenty, shall crown the labours of her servants . The class which guides and co-ordinates industry, gathering together its products and distributing them over India and over the whole world, which shall welcome into its ranks the shrewd brains and keen insight scattered over India, like jewels embedded in matrices of lesser value—this class shall be the steward and distributor of the wealth of the Nation, the backbone of National prosperity. Into it shall flow of those whose inborn talents fit them for this great branch of National Service, on which, more perhaps than on any other, the general prosperity of Nations ever depends

What does Justice mean to the huge masses of the people, now toiling without hope, and suffering without relief, the masses who now labour that others may enjoy, who create wealth which they do not share, the producers, whether of food, or of articles of necessary use, or of pleasure ? They see the food stream outwards while their families are left

hungry, the products of their hands going to others while their cottages are void of comfort. To them Justice means that the labourers' food and seed for the next sowing shall be the first charges on the crops his toil has raised, that the Panchayat shall be re-established, so that he shall manage his own village business, that the village officials shall again be village servants instead of village tyrants, that he shall have replaced in his village the village school, teaching his boys and girls that they may become more clever and useful in village life, and that any boy or girl cleverer than others may be able to go on to higher schools, a way being opened also from these to the University, less painful and hard than that now existing.

For what is Justice? It is giving to every man his birth-right, and that birthright is Freedom, Swarâj, Home Rule.

Friends, will you work with my colleagues and myself to win this Home Rule, which will make India happy within her own borders, and great among the Nations of the world? Will you not work with us for your own liberty, and for the liberty of your children after you? India is linked with Great Britain by the good Will of God, who would knit East and West together for the welfare of the whole world. The tie is now a tie of force, let us make it a tie of love. But a tie of love can only come when India is free, a willing Partner in the Empire, and not a Dependency. Stand up like men, speak out like men. Then shall your voices, ringing across the ocean, reach Britain, the Mother of free institutions in the West, and she will greet a sister, India, the Mother of free institutions in the East, who sent out to the West her sons and daughters to build up freedom there.

so that now, together, they might build a mighty Commonwealth of Free Nations, and bring happiness to mankind

—26 December 1917, *New India*

## A MESSAGE TO BRITAIN

TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN AND TO THE SUPREME GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

*As Britain deals with India, so will the High Gods deal with her* —July 1915, *The Theosophist*

The time is a time for grave and weighty decisions, decisions that affect the future not only of Great Britain, India and the Empire, but of the World. The war has reached a critical stage, and plain speech is necessary, alike on the part of Great Britain and of India, if the Empire is to triumph over her enemies, if Liberty is to triumph over Force, Law over Autocracy. In the working of Providence, who guides the destinies of Nations, Great Britain and India have been brought together, and have lived side by side for 160 years. The union has brought both gain and loss to both gain to India, by being brought into contact with a liberty-loving and progressive western Nation, gain to England by an immense increase of wealth and impetus to commerce, loss to India by the destruction of her power of self-defence, and by her becoming a dependency instead of a number of warlike, wealthy, and independent States, loss to England by the clouding of her principles in the adoption of autocracy, and by the consequent lowering of her status in the world's eyes. The Arms Act of 1878 completed

India's subjection and helplessness, and in the moment of the Empire's need, she finds herself in danger of invasion from Central Asia as in the old days, but of Central Asia dominated by Germany, and herself without her old power of self-defence

Yet the old martial spirit is not dead, as is shown by her soldiers in the present war. Bengal has shown the capacity of her young men for quickly becoming soldiers. And the spirit Bengal has shown exists all over India, even outside the so-called martial races. Can that be called out now for the defence alike of India and the Empire? Is it too late to evoke the spirit that sprang up in 1914, and was rejected?

We believe it is not even yet too late, but that which Mr Lloyd George said of Ireland is equally true of India. We cannot ask young men to fight for principles, the application of which is denied to their own country. A subject race cannot fight for others with the heart and the energy with which a free race can fight for the freedom of itself and others. If India is to make great sacrifices in defence of the Empire, it must be as a partner in the Empire and not as a Dependency. Let her feel she is fighting for her own freedom as well as for the freedom of others, that she will have her place as a Free Nation in a Commonwealth of Free Nations under the British Crown, and then she will strain every nerve to stand by England to the last.

For this there must be mutual trust. His Majesty's Government has already promised Responsible Government to India. Let full Responsible Government be established in India within a definite period to be fixed by Statute, and a Bill to that effect be introduced into Parliament at once.

let India's leaders be taken into confidence now, and treated as recognized sharers in the perils and triumphs of the struggle, let the Governor-General and the Secretary of State for India say to the leaders of the people what they want, let us all feel that we are one in heart and aim, that we are not servants fighting for our masters, but free men fighting beside free men for a common heritage of Freedom

—1918 Congress, Delhi

## TRUST US!

We do not want to break our tie with England, we do not want to see it broken by a War into which she entered in defence of Liberty, we detest German tyranny and German methods, the policy of Great Britain has made it impossible for us alone to defend our own frontiers and our own coasts, we do not want to change masters, but to share their freedom, and to live in the happy union of equals, for mutual advantage

We are ready to make sacrifices, we are ready to fight and work in India as Englishmen and Englishwomen are fighting and working in England, but it must be for a similar reason, we must work and fight to win liberty, the prize of victory, as they work and fight to keep the liberty they won in past generations Responsible Government is promised, but the promise is indefinite, hangs floating in the air Let England pledge herself definitely to redeem that promise by accepting here, as in Ireland, that which our leaders have asked, in Congress and League assembled, and we will work heart and soul to save Britain, India, and the Empire, we will triumph with her, or we will go down with her in a world

ruin Do not misunderstand us We shall try to help Britain in any case, for we cannot forget the ties of many years, and we believe that, in the immediate future, liberty stands or falls with the British Empire But, if Britain refuses us our place in the Empire, we shall try as leading a forlorn hope Whereas if Britain welcomes us as a Nation whose freedom depends upon the issue of the struggle, we feel sure that we shall win Only the hope of freedom can arouse popular enthusiasm to the fighting point Let not the reactionary British politicians prevail at this moment, and thus ruin the Empire Trust us, and we will not fail you Be true to us, and we will be true to you Do not ask us to give everything, while you give nothing, to trust you while you distrust us, and try to use us for your own advantage only Drill us, arm us, officer us with our own countrymen, make us a huge citizen army, and take if you will, the flower of our troops to fight abroad But let us fight under the banner of Liberty, for nothing less than the hope of that will nerve our men to fight and our women to sacrifice

—*The Present Crisis*, published by the Commonwealth Office

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*We claim liberty, not favour. We claim freedom—not the Goodwill of the Government. Freedom is the right of every human being and without the process of law none should have the power to take it.... Unless a Government is in sympathy with the legitimate aspirations, the legitimate desires of the people, then that Government in the presence of the true Justice of God has no right to govern.*

—1 January 1919, *New India*

## 1918 and 1942

*By the turn of the cyclic wheel we are back to a period comparable to those stirring days before the 1918 Armistice when Dr. Besant wrought valiantly for India's Self-Determination. The following gives the spirit of those days, equally applicable to these very days of 1942.*

The President of The Special Congress called upon Mrs Besant to move the third resolution, and she was received with a great ovation, as she ascended the rostrum. The Resolution runs thus

(a) That this Congress declares that the people of India are fit for Responsible Government and repudiates the assumption to the contrary contained in the Report on the Indian Constitutional Reforms, (b) that this Congress entirely disagrees with the formula contained in the said Report that the Provinces are the domain in which the earlier steps should be taken towards the progressive realization of Responsible Government, and that the authority of the Government of India in essential matters must remain indisputable, pending the experience of the effect of the changes proposed to be introduced in the Provinces, and this Congress is of opinion that a similar and simultaneous advance is indispensable both in the Provinces and the Government of India

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### *The War and Indian Aspirations are Closely Intertwined*

In the Report the Secretary of State and the Viceroy have remarked on the change of spirit which has come over the Indian Nation during the last few years. Speaking of the War as one of the reasons for the change in the attitude

of the Nations, the Report says "The War is far from being won Unless it is won, India's political aspirations are a vain dream" We would call the attention of the Indian politicians to this obvious truth I would like, speaking from this place, to call also the attention of His Majesty's Secretary of State and of H E the Viceroy to the equally obvious fact that, unless Indian aspirations are satisfied, the War will take a very long time before it is ended We have spoken in our first resolution that we pray for a decisive victory and for the final vindication of the principles of freedom, justice, and self-determination, but the triumph of those principles means Self-Government in India, not only in European Countries or perchance in the African Colonies of Germany Hence we would like these illustrious gentlemen to remember that it is true that the War and Indian aspirations are closely intertwined, and the more those aspirations are realized in fact, the swifter will the victory come and sit over the banners of the Allied troops

### *India's Unfitness for Self-Government Challenged*

It is asked, dealing with this matter, is India fit for Self-Government? Many reasons are given why she should not be regarded as fit for Self-Government It is said in Chapter 6 on the conditions of the problem that there are several serious defects which render India at present unfit for Responsible Government We are told that we must remember what the working of a responsible institution involves We are told that the electors send men to the Councils with power to act in their name, that the Councils commit the power to the Ministers over whom they reserve

control in the form of the power of removing them from office. The elector controls his Government, because, if his representatives in the Council disapprove of a certain action, he can change his representative at the next election. Then it is argued that we have not sufficient electorates, that we have not developed the power of toleration in the majorities and patience in the minorities, and that the qualities are only developed by exercise and are effected by education, occupation, and social organization. It is because those qualities are only developed by exercise that India asks for a chance of developing them by the exercise of Responsible Government (Hear, Hear). If they are only developed by exercise, how are they to be developed here without exercise? If a man can only learn to swim by going into water, will he learn to swim by remaining on the shore? That is what these illustrious gentlemen suggest, namely, that you must not have Responsible Government because you have not the qualities, that the qualities can only be developed by exercise, and that you shall not have the exercise in order to develop the qualities. That is working in a very vicious circle, and we want to get out of it. Our answer is England was not educated when she won her liberties in the great struggle between the Long Parliament and King Charles I. It is not a question of literary education and the percentage of literates as compared with the educated people in England. It is a question of manhood, a question of National dignity, and a question of pride in your own people and of the traditions of your Nation that make you fit.

## Are the Peasantry Illiterate?

When we are told here that the peasantry are illiterate, we say Yes, but if we get Self-Government, we will make them educated and even different during a short time. Education does not depend entirely upon literacy. Education depends on what we call culture, tradition, inherited type of brain and heart that grows up in the midst of a great and free Nation. The peasantry of India are not uneducated people, although they are not literate in the ordinary sense of the term, and I appeal for that to history.

Is it not from India that the Nations of the West found their Self-Governing Institutions and established them as early as the days of the Saxons? Has not Sir Henry Maine said that the common law in England, growing out of the Saxon village, is the very type of Aryan Self-Government that you find in Indian villages up to the time of Sir Thomas Munro, of which many a trace remains down to the present time?

The villagers governed themselves for thousands of years, which you find by the evidence of history, by literature, by tradition, by copper-plate memorial, by inscriptions engraven on pillars, and you find not what they say here, that they have never used a vote, but you find the very contrary. You find the village people voting in the way they vote today. I can take you back to 400 years before the Christian Era, when the practice of voting was found among the Indian people (Cheers). Have you realized that, when you read the history of India, you have people who have only studied India since the days of Lord Clive? But if you will look at their story, if you will look at their methods of making their Councils, and making their popular assemblies, you

will find that the Indo-Aryan, as he is called, was for long far in advance of the Saxon younger Aryan in the west of the European lands I ask you to remember that there are records still as to the methods of Council Government far more advanced than the kind you find proposed in these Reforms Are you aware that in early India the King was not the ruler without a Council around him? Are you aware that that Council, sometimes called the Sabha, was the Executive of the Government, that, in addition to that, there was the Popular Assembly or the Samiti? The two are found throughout the history of India You find still right up in Bihar many traces of the old Popular Assembly You find Halls still, where the people meet in council to decide questions of public policy It is not only in the village you find Self-Government, but it is in tribal republics, it is in aristocratic republics, it is in Monarchies, it is in the Empires, and in all of these an element of proper Government comes in And so true is that, it is declared that if a King governs badly, he may be deposed from the throne and another placed in his stead And everywhere, through the course of Indian History, you find the people governing themselves, looking with care and intelligence into the problems of administration and of policy Not only is that true, but when you find Mr Montagu or his amanuenses, probably Mr Morris, writing the bureaucratic view of the Government, you find him saying that the villager has caste panchayats, but has never exercised a vote on public questions I say that it is historically false, that there are masses of evidence now available, which show that he has exercised his mind on all these questions

## *Classes and Divisions*

It is said that there are so many classes and divisions. It is said that the bureaucrat must protect the masses of the people against the tyranny of the higher classes. But how far have they defended them? Can men of alien blood and alien custom and alien ways of thinking, by any possibility, understand the necessity of the masses as their own flesh and blood in the educated classes of the people? I know why they make the mistake, for they are foreigners. The man who dwells in the West End of London, the noble and the highly placed, does not understand the man that lives in the slum separated from him by differences of birth and by miserable poverty. But the Indian is not divided like that in horizontal classes as in England. He is divided, I grant it, by caste, but one class includes the Raja, the noble, the landowner, the banker, and the peasant-cultivator, and all these are found within the limits of a single caste. And as I heard Mr. Vijayaraghava Chari say the other day that, if there be a marriage or a festival, all the relatives are called together, and no one says, "You are a poor man, you are a rich man, you are a Raja, or you are a peasant-cultivator." They sit and eat together, they meet as brothers, and there is no distinction here between classes in that way, save that of education. That is the difference that some from the village have been educated men, while others have remained uneducated. If one of you who is a lawyer or a barrister coming back from England has a father and mother in the village, do you lose your brothers or sisters or cousins who are in the village? Do you lose your power of knowing their will and of representing them,

because you have got a certain amount of foreign education? You are not alien to your own people, you are their own, and they belong to you and you to them. Hence I say that, as in other countries, at the first dawn of Self-Government India is fit to rule herself. She knows her own troubles, her own difficulties, her own wants, and in the National Congress, since it first met, one of its preoccupations was to press for education, to press for industrial occupations, to press for the opening up of technical schools, for the lightening of income-tax on the poorer, and the getting rid of the salt-tax, and all the things that were wanted for the helping of the people have gone out from the Congress Pandals and not from the offices of the bureaucrats.

### *Changes in Provinces and Central Government*

We ask in the second part of the resolution that changes in the Provinces and the Central Government may go on side by side. There is no good in moving for liberty in the Provinces, if you keep autocracy at Delhi and Simla. It is idle to say that you give liberty to those who live in the Provinces, when you make the autocrat, who has power over all legislation, more strongly entrenched than ever in his power in the Central Government, and so it is that we ask that the change may be simultaneous. You can make one longer than the other. If you like, you may take five years for the Provinces and 15 or 20 years for the Central Government. You may make more steps in the Central than in the Provincial Governments. But there must be change in both. Without that, it is like having a cart with one little wheel and

a big wheel, with the result that the whole machine will turn from side to side, autocracy on one and partial liberty on the other, gradual autonomy on one and absolutism on the other. You can never drive the State Coach with wheels of such unequal size. So, we say, bring the whole Government on together, make your liberty or partial liberty as it is in Provinces, and also introduce the same liberty in the Central Government. Give that as your proposals, and we will gladly accept them. Give us the opportunity, if you will, of making mistakes, for by making mistakes men grow wise. Unless you give them responsibility, unless you give them power, they will always remain children and not men. They will always remain in tutelage, and not capable of managing their own affairs.

### *Nations by Themselves are Made*

So, when people come to you and say that you ask too much, when people declare that you are unfit and have no right to govern yourself, say to them. We are men not children. We are a great Nation and not a barbarous people, our culture goes back far, far into the past. Long before you dreamt of culture in the West, India was a highly civilized trading and prosperous Nation. Appeal to your past to justify your hope of the future, point to your past to show that you are fit.

And this I say, in conclusion, that there is no other Nation, neither England, nor America, nor any one of the Allies, nor Germany, nor Austria, who have a right to say to another Nation. You shall not be free, you are not worthy to be free, and you must remain a subject people. That

question is not to be decided on the battlefields of France, but it has to be decided in India, in your Congress, in your Conferences, and wherever you gather together. No nation is made free by another Nation. It wins its own freedom, and by the winning shows its fitness to be free.

—1 September 1918, New India

## " TOO BUSY TO DEAL WITH INDIA "

Mr Lloyd George, it is said, has appealed for the suspending of all political agitation until after the War. Mr Lloyd George could not have done that, because in the middle of the War he made an Irish Convention to discuss Home Rule for Ireland. They were not so concentrated on the War, so busy, so active with the War but that the Irish Convention should sit month after month at Dublin to make the scheme. Mr Lloyd George promised that he will use the whole of his power in the Government to pass that scheme through Parliament, as soon as it comes into his hands. If he can do so for Ireland, he dare not say to us, "Stop all agitation in India." His Government have passed the biggest Reform Bill that has been ever passed in England. They have given manhood suffrage. Is it not controversial? It has been a matter of controversy ever since 1894, bitter controversy and angry controversy, and it has now been passed in the middle of the War. The Woman Suffrage Bill has also been passed. Six million women have been added to the register of the voters, nearly doubling the electorate. A leap in the dark, no one knows how the women are going to vote. Why has he done that? What happened in England was this. They have not avoided controversial

questions, but they have managed them by compromise, before the questions came before the House. They have got the two parties together, they have talked the question over, and they have agreed upon an arrangement. The Reform Bill was made by the Speaker's Committee, and bristling with controversial questions as it was it was passed through the "two" houses, and not in one point was there any divergence of opinion. Why cannot they do the same thing here? If England, where London is being bombed day after day, England, where there is danger of invasion by Germany, there is shortage of some of the most necessaries of life, if a country under such a strain is sending out its men to the battlefield by millions and not knowing how the battle will go, if that country had time enough and thought enough to give to great questions of reform, why may not we, seven thousand miles away, have a little time to give to the liberty of our own country? (Cheers)

—16 April 1918, New India

## OUR INTERWOVEN DESTINIES

### *India and Britain*

We, who have learned to look on the scroll of history as the unrolling of a definite Plan, in which each Race and Sub-Race and Nation plays its own part, cannot but watch the present happenings with intensest interest, as each new event comes into sight, and is seen as a fragment of the great mosaic. In that Plan, as often said, the bringing together of India and Great Britain was for the helping of the world, partly in order that India's priceless treasures of

spiritual knowledge might be circulated over all the world in the language that is the most widely spread at the present time, and thus reach and influence the virile but unspiritual younger Nations, springing from the sturdy British stock. Partly also that the Indians, who had so deeply sinned by their divisions, might be driven together by a foreign rule and prepared to make a united Nation. Partly that the literature of Freedom, found nowhere in such splendid form and instinct with such fiery passion as in the tongue of Milton, Burke and Shelley, might re-awaken in India her sleeping traditions of intellectual freedom, out of which all other forms of freedom grow, and might drive that mighty force into modern channels, to irrigate the vast extent of Indian life. Through the union of India and Great Britain, at first as ruler and ruled, and then as willing, equal partners in a world-wide Empire, humanity was to be prepared for the Coming of the World-Teacher, and the foundations of a new civilization were to be laid.

—April 1917, *The Theosophist*

For the sake of India, Britain and the Empire, it is necessary that India and Britain should be closely bound together as equal comrades. How many homes in England would today not have been left desolate, if India had been a Self-Governing Dominion, ready to send out her millions to weight the scale of victory for the Allies. How many precious lives would have been saved, how many children would not have been orphaned, if Britain had stood for Liberty within her own Empire, and had not been a house divided against itself.

—April 1918, *The Theosophist*

I have often pointed out in the past, and have just repeated, that Great Britain was peculiarly fitted for her task by her own past history and present Constitution I may reproduce here that which I wrote in New India on March 19th

Great Britain—which does not include Ireland—is by far the freest country in the world, not only freer than the Central Powers, but freer than the Republic of France and even than the Republic of the United States of America She has a free Press, and personal liberty is less shackled than in any other land, there is less interference with personal liberty there than anywhere else in the world, and property is safe from executive seizure outside the law It is because of this that the British throne is safer than any other, and it is because of this that Great Britain was chosen out of the competing European Powers, to bring India into the circle of free World-Powers East and West, Asia and Europe, can only be brought together in peaceful and harmonious union through Great Britain and India, standing side by side as Free Nations, in close and intimate cooperation If the primacy of Asia falls either to Japan or China—both Fourth Race Nations—evolution will suffer a serious set-back

Great Britain and India together are the natural leaders of Asia, for the civilizations of eastern Asia have been largely dominated by Indian thought The Lord Buddha is followed by millions in Japan, China, Tibet and Siam Japan has long looked to India as to the Mother of her people The hoary

antiquity of China, ante-dating the birth of the Aryan Race, has been deeply leavened by her thought and culture. The peoples of Persia, Mesopotamia, the Caucasus, Arabia, are all branches of the wide-spreading banyan tree, rooted in India, and those branches have spread over Europe itself, the Kelt and the Teuton finding in the Aryan root-stock the ancient unity now separated into such wide divergencies. What more fitting than that India and Great Britain, the eldest and the youngest, grey Mother and lusty Daughter, should meet again in the Family Home, and claim their joint Heritage? May it not be that, in this terrible War, there may be developed by the wondrous alchemy of God a binding material to unite the East and West?

—April 1917, *The Theosophist*

### *Europe and India*

Even in a question seemingly remote from India—the building of a United States of Europe, Dr Besant saw India's release as a vital factor. In a lecture given 2 October 1927 on a Federation of European States, she said

Soon I am going back to India, to strive there to increase the movement for India's freedom. That has a great part in this future, because as long as India is outside, a subject Nation, a War of colour may break out at any moment—the most disastrous War to which any civilization can be exposed. Before we can look for the United States of Europe we must make friends with our coloured brothers everywhere, and India is the one place where that is at once possible, because she is within the Realm of what should be the

great British Commonwealth of Free Nations instead of an Empire ruling over a subject people

—*The Future of Europe*

## WHEN WILL THE WAR END AND HOW?

Asked in December 1917 by *The Christian Commonwealth* “When will the War end and how?” Dr Besant says

I have no idea when the War will end, but I do not think it will end until Britain lives up to her past traditions and her present professions. How it will end depends once more on her treatment of India, if she sets India free, India will arm herself and fight for Britain, then the man-power needed will be supplied, and there will be a glorious peace, which will last indefinitely. Britain and India, hand-in-hand, will keep the peace of the world. If she opposes India’s freedom and prevents Mr Montagu’s noble mission from ending in full success, then the peace will be inconclusive and precarious, and War will, ere very long, return

—2 May 1918, *New India*

The end is sure, for the world has climbed too far on its upward way to be again cast down into barbarism. Victory will crown the arms of those who are fighting for Freedom, and are at death-grips with Autocracy. But victory is delayed, because Britain is a house divided against itself, battling for freedom in Europe, maintaining autocracy in India. In the Hebrew story, the Israelites were defeated by the enemy because one of their number dishonestly took that to which he had no right, and not until the crime was expiated could victory be won. While the sin of Achan is found in the Allied camp, victory is delayed.

If Britain would cleanse her hands from enforcing her irresponsible rule over a great Nation panting for freedom, and would act in Asia consistently with her professions in Europe, the War-clouds would be scattered and the Sun of Peace would rise with healing in his wings. Then shall India and Britain together stand as guardians of the peace of the world.

—December 1917, *Theosophical Presidential Address*

### *Germany's Fifth-Column Activity*

The world cannot feel assured of lasting peace with one-fifth of its population in a state of unrest, held down by repressive legislation. Is it conceivable that India, an Asian country, will look around Asia, and see Japan, China, Persia, Afghanistan, Siam, autonomous, self-determining, working out their own national destinies, growing in prosperity, masters of their resources, despising India as their inferior, because subject to an alien Autocracy, and that India, once the greatest of them all, will remain satisfied and content under the yoke? Surrounded by a jeering ring of free and self-determining Nations, will not the humiliation pierce her very heart? Will not the world-jury recognize the danger of a new conflict arising between Great Britain and Germany, of Germany, beaten in the West, turning eastwards to seek her *revanche* in the East, carrying on a subtle propaganda in India, hypocritically posing as a friend of liberty, reversing her present role of a defender of autocracy into that of a defender of liberty, and throwing Britain, the destroyer of autocracy in Europe, into the odious part of an upholder thereof in Asia?

Would not true statesmanship, instead of tinkering with petty reforms and leaving untouched the citadel of autocracy, the Government of India, recognize the gravity of the situation, accept the principles of the C L [Congress-League] Scheme as now reaffirmed and inserted into the M C [Montagu-Chelmsford] proposals, and thus turn India into a buttress of the British Commonwealth, the Premier Nation of Asia, the pledge of the world's enduring peace, a field made fertile for all good by mutual love, instead of sterile by distrust on one side and resentment on the other?

—11 September 1918, *New India*

## *For World Safety*

### *To her British Labour Colleagues*

If we are free, Britain's Empire in the East is safe, and we can guard Australasia, too thinly peopled to protect her immense coast-line. When with you in 1914, I said the price of India's loyalty is India's freedom. Now I say the price of your Empire's safety is India's freedom. Help us to become a free Commonwealth under the British Crown, and we will bring our man-power to secure the World-Peace

—3 December 1917, *New India*

Even five millions of Indians out of 315 millions trained as soldiers under military discipline could save the Empire and make further attacks on the Empire impossible

—10 February 1917, *New India*

Without India, Britain would fall from her position as the greatest of World-Powers, while with India, and possibly re-linked with the United States in close alliance, she would lead the forward evolution of Humanity for centuries to come.

But in future, unless India wins Self-Government, she will look enviously at her self-governing neighbours, and the contrast will intensify her unrest

But even if she gains Home Rule, as I believe she will, her position in the Empire will imperatively demand that she shall be strong as well as free. She becomes not only a vulnerable point in the Empire, as the Asian Nations evolve their own ambitions and rivalries, but also a possession to be battled for. Mr Laing once said "India is the milch-cow of England," a Kāmadhenu, in fact, a "cow of plenty"; and if that view should arise in Asia, the ownership of the milch-cow would become a matter of dispute, as of old between Vashishtha and Vishvamitra. Hence India must be capable of self-defence both by land and sea. There may be a struggle for the primacy of Asia, for supremacy in the Pacific, for the mastery of Australasia, to say nothing of the inevitable trade-struggles, in which Japan is already endangering Indian industry and Indian trade, while India is unable to protect herself.

In order to face these larger issues with equanimity, the Empire requires a contented, strong, self-dependent and armed India, able to hold her own and to aid the Dominions, especially Australia, with her small population and immensely unoccupied and undefended area. India alone has the manpower which can effectively maintain the Empire in Asia, and it is a short-sighted, a criminally short-sighted, policy not to build up her strength as a Self-Governing State within the Commonwealth of Free Nations under the British Crown. The Englishmen in India talk loudly of their interests, what can this mere handful do to protect their interests against

attack in the coming years? Only in a free and powerful India will they be safe. Those who read Japanese papers know how strongly, even during the War, they parade unchecked their pro-German sympathies, and how likely after the War is an alliance between these two ambitious and warlike Nations. Japan will come out of the War with her army and navy unweakened, and her trade immensely strengthened. Every consideration of sane statesmanship should lead Great Britain to trust India more than Japan, so that the British Empire in Asia may rest on the sure foundation of Indian loyalty, the loyalty of a free and contented people, rather than be dependent on the continued friendship of a possible future rival. For international friendships are governed by national interests, and are built on quick-sands, not on rock.

—1922, *The Future of Indian Politics*

### *If Only!*

IF ONLY the Government of India, while crushing the conspiracy of crime, would publicly declare itself in favour of Dominion Status for India, not in stages but as a whole, then indeed it would rally to its side all patriotic Indians, and would write its name indelibly on the Roll of Fame, as the Government which put an end to unrest in India, and linked her with Britain by indissoluble bands of mutual Service, mutual Trust, and mutual Love. Otherwise we tread again the old weary round of unrest, conspiracy, repression, unsatisfactory reforms, unrest and so weiter, till India breaks away to the infinite loss of both countries.

—8 November 1924, *New India*

## FREE INDIANS ALONE CAN DEFEND INDIA

What is the right relation of the student to politics? He should study the principles of politics and economics in relation to the history and present conditions of his own country, but should not apply them in political action while he is *in statu pupillari*. That is what I have said and insisted on for 20 years, and still say. In normal times it is easy to maintain this rule. In abnormal times, such as the present, with the excitement of a World War, the peril of the Empire, the rapidly changing political position of his own country in that Empire, the maintenance of the rule becomes more difficult, and some amount of excitement is inevitable. Now that the Government has called on the elder student population to enrol themselves as members of the Indian Defence Force, to submit themselves to "strict military discipline" so as to be ready to undertake garrison duty if called on, the rule practically becomes inoperative for the recruits.

Young men cannot be expected to make the sacrifice asked for unless they are inspired by a passionate love for their Motherland, such as emptied the Universities of Great Britain. Love for a foreign Empire in which they are a Dependency cannot do it, love for an Empire in which they are a partner will do it. The prospect of the prolongation of a condition of inferiority will not inspire, the love of Liberty and the hope of winning it, and of becoming citizens of an Empire of free Nations will inspire. Let there be no mistake. When Britons want to flatter Indians they call them

"fellow-citizens," but both Britons and Indians know perfectly well that Indians are not citizens. Citizens of the Empire live in countries where they have a free press, where they are represented, where they tax themselves, where they cannot be imprisoned without trial, nor their property forfeited without a judicial proceeding. These are elementary rights of citizenship, and they do not exist in India. Therefore Indians are not citizens of the Empire, and if they defend it, it is in the hope of winning freedom and citizenship within it.

Students know all this, and if they—and their elders—are called to perform the citizen's duty of defence, their answer to the call implies that they look for the right of the citizen as the just correlative of the duty.

—2 March 1917, *New India*

Our very Reasonable Demand is "Give us Home Rule and then you can arm a free and contented India as the strongest bulwark of the Empire." From the British point of view this is probably the strongest argument in favour of Home Rule. For Britain is in deadly need of man-power and has exhausted her own resources, she has wrought a miracle in the number of men she has sent to the battle-fields, but she can do little, if anything, further. She must fall back on India, or make an inconclusive peace and prepare for another War—a ghastly prospect. But she dare not arm India until India is free. A Nation in bondage that is so unreasonable as not to agitate would be unworthy of freedom, would be a nation of cattle, not of human beings. Only liberty befits a Nation of men.

—16 February 1918, *New India*

"India alone has the man-power which can effectively maintain the Empire in Asia, and it is a short-sighted, a criminally short-sighted, policy not to build up her strength as a Self-Governing State within the Commonwealth of Free Nations under the British Crown," said Dr Besant in 1917. *New India*, her journal, quoting the above, adds the prophetic comment "A few years hence, everyone will see that this is mere common-sense though some solemnly tell us that 'India is defended outside India' Is anyone really sofatuos as to suppose that if the Germans engineered a thrust through Persia on Baluchistan the victories of the Allies in France would foil that thrust? Might not such an attempt be made, as in the Panjab, to create a diversion here which would help their situation in Europe?"

—3 April 1918, *New India*

Nothing will save India but the Indian valour, willingly coming to the rescue, if contented by the grant of Home Rule. The British Empire's fate hinges on the fate of India, and therefore it is but wisdom and prudence to keep India contented by granting Home Rule to her. At present she is treated with distrust, and the Arms Act is but one example of it. That shows that English rulers cannot trust Indians. A rule based on the people's love and confidence needs no Arms Act. India has shown her fervent loyalty, India has saved England when the gallant Indian forces barred the way to Paris. It is they who filled up the gaps in the English army. Let the English Nation know that India is a tremendous reservoir of man-power, far greater than America. The Americans take long to come. Indians are at hand at any time. And is it to the dignity of England to say that it

depends upon Americans and not on Indians? A Home-Ruled India will defend, if needs be, any country in the world with its tremendous man-power, and therefore a Home-Ruled India is necessary for the Empire. It is a matter of life and death for the Empire to arm Indians for defending it. Let this be said in plain words before the English public

—15 March 1918, *New India*

## A PERSONAL NOTE

One sits at the editorial table with the sword of Damocles hanging over one's head on the thin hair of some official. It is heavy and anxious work, but it is glorious to be allowed thus to serve the Ancient Motherland, to think of her, write for her, speak for her, lie for her, and to dream of the happier days when Press Acts and the rest of the legislation of that ilk shall be of the past. The chains of Press Acts here are inexpressibly galling, but it is for India's sake, and, for her, even slavery is welcome. Better is it to be a thrall here, at the mercy of any ill-tempered official, than to be free, in any other land.

—December 1914, *The Young Citizen*

But, after all, what matter these passing incidents in the long struggle of Liberty against Autocracy? Gallant men lost their mortal lives in that struggle in France, in Belgium, in Italy, in the Balkans, in Palestine, in Mesopotamia, in Africa. It is not much if others, in India, lose their reputations in the similar fight against Autocracy here. In both cases, the end is equally sure, and those who follow the flag of Liberty will triumph, for where Liberty is, there is Victory.

—30 September 1918, *New India*

# IV. Obstacles on India's Pathway—

*THE PROPHET WARNS*

I regard the Non-Cooperation movement as the greatest  
setback to India's freedom that has been started

—March 1924, The Theosophist

# 1 RECURRENT GANDHIAN, ANARCHY

[One of the great tragedies that have most effectually, even if but temporarily, blocked India's clear road to freedom is the philosophy and political leadership of Mr M K Gandhi who is deified by many Indians under the title of " Mahatma " and has become literally India's Dictator While greatly reverencing Gandhiji the saint, Dr Besant regarded him as a most dangerous obstacle to India's progress ]

## I. GANDHIJI'S CRIMINAL UNWISDOM AND DISINTEGRATING INFLUENCE

MR GANDHI'S influence on politics since he came to India has always been destructive I remember how, when I expressed to Mr Gokhale, before Mr Gandhi's arrival in India, my pleasure about his coming, and my hope that he would be a great help in winning Freedom for India, that wise and far-seeing statesman replied " No, you are mistaken , Gandhi will cause a great setback to our political movement " His words have proved to be sadly true The wild-cat movements of Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience [now called " Mass Struggle " ] devastated the political field, blighting the promising harvest that was showing its green shoots above

the soil. Of course, I opposed these *insane* propositions, but the wave of fanatical fetish-worship swept over India and carried all before it. Gokhale was happy in passing from this world before he saw the ruin of his life's work.

There is nothing new in the teaching of Mr. Gandhi on Non-Cooperation. It is based on the application by Count Tolstoy of the teaching of part of the "Sermon on the Mount" to the life of the individual and the Nation.

"I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away"—S Matt V, 39-42

Tolstoy thought that this teaching was binding on every Christian and on every Christian Nation. Hence the teaching of the "Martyr Nation". Russia has been preeminently the "martyr Nation" not willingly, but helplessly, serving perhaps as a lesson to the world, that humanity is not yet fitted to follow, as Nations, the life of the Sanyasi, and that the lofty teaching of the Lord Buddha as to perfect love, and of the Lord Christ for those who were strong enough to obey the command "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect," needs to be checked by His other command in the same sermon "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn against and rend you." The efforts of Tolstoy to teach the one without the other, to address to men full of

desires, full of greed and coveteousness, the precept which only the self-controlled, the desireless, could practise without encouraging violence and lawlessness, have borne bitter fruit in the Red Terror, where the violent rose into power and trampled under foot the gentle and the weak. God grant that similar unbalanced teaching here, based on the theories of Tolstoy, may not plunge India into similar horrors. The exquisite balance in Hinduism of duties according to faculties, the dharma of each individual and each caste—when caste was real and ere the confusion of castes set in—was the foundation on which was built the marvellous structure of Indian civilization, stable throughout millennium after millennium. Until the Inner Ruler Immortal rules the lower manifestations of consciousness, and the whole nature is conformed to that of the God within, mankind needs the pressure of external law to check the violence of the lower nature, and at the peril of ruin does a State forget that “Order is Heaven’s first law.” If Russia’s agony teaches this lesson to the foolish, her suffering will not have been in vain.

Dr Magee, Bishop of Peterborough, remarked on this application that if any Nation obeyed the Sermon on the Mount, it would not exist for a week. Mr Gandhi does not follow his master in his advice to apply non-resistance to the Nation, he applies it to individual thefts and assaults but advises on the contrary to “destroy it,” or “bring it to its knees,” or “compel it to yield.” The whole theory is obviously in flat contradiction of the teaching of the Manu as regards National organization.

Mr Gandhi by introducing it here in India—where the old caste system had sensibly assigned Yoga to the

spiritual only and had appointed the Kshatriyas to rule, defend and keep order in the State, has done deadly mischief, at a critical time, to political reform, as well as endangered Society by revolution. Let us during this time of danger, drop all criticism of Government action, and stand firmly by the Government against revolution which means bloodshed at home and invasions from abroad.

But when has Mr Gandhi entered the political arena without bringing about "Himalayan blunders"? He is not a politician, he is a vague, dreamy mystic, out of touch with ordinary human nature. He believes in practising the precepts of the "Sermon on the Mount" [and], wants India to practise them by "non-violent civil disobedience," expecting a peasant to see his land and cattle seized for non-payment of taxes, and his family reduced to starvation without resistance. —1919, 1923, 1924, 1929

The Masters note each worker for the Motherland and send Their blessings to all who render Her faithful service. We must not become discouraged, even if the road winds ever up the hill, for the end is sure. It is very unfortunate that so much enthusiasm and self-sacrifice should be wasted over the salt question, when that and so many other grievances would quickly be swept away were India free. It is the lack of freedom, for want of which India is slowly bleeding to death, and she wastes time and strength over minor grievances when these should be consecrated to win the Dominion Status which Mr Gandhi truly says is equivalent to Independence and is now within our reach, but is neglected in favour of the spectacular policy of boiling salt-water. Cannot Indians see that Mr Gandhi is unconsciously

a weapon in the Government's hands to delay the struggle for India's Freedom? His success means India's failure and the resultant chaos

—24 April 1930, *New India*

Mr Gandhi lives in a world of his own, quite different from the world of human beings, with their crude ideas, their easily aroused passions, and their sudden bursts of activity. He is dangerous, well-meaning man as he is, because his imaginary human beings whom he arranges so nicely are not the human beings who live in our world, and do not dance to his piping, as he expects them to do. His imaginary Government which is paralyzed by Non-Cooperation bears no resemblance to the actual Government, prepared to take a part in the game not laid down for it in the drama. Thus, when a Non-Cooperator lately said he would not cooperate with the Government, the Government serenely declined to cooperate with him and would not supply Government water to his land. There was a certain humour in the situation, but the first Non-Cooperator was naturally indignant when the Government acquiesced in his proposal. Unhappily, the outcome, when the proceedings really begin, will not be of this farcical nature.

It all means alienation, hatred increasing between the two Nations in whose union lies the hope of the world

—August 1920, *The Theosophist*

It is well to see how Mr Gandhi has changed. He used to speak against boycott, as involving hatred, he now preaches it. He used to preach truth, he now advocates the boycott of foreign goods and the keeping of a vow, and uses trains, motors, posts, telegraphs, all foreign. He used to abhor bloodshed, he now contemplates calmly

rivers of blood. It is useless to multiply his kaleidoscopic changes. The fact is he is taking advantage of Indian discontent to spread the gospel of his master Tolstoy, a philosophic western anarchist, who had the sense not to spread his teachings among the ignorant as does his disciple.

All this is the more reckless, because it has come in the way of solid political, industrial and educative work, while it stirs up fanaticism and violence. He seeks to prevent India from taking a great step towards ordered freedom, and has divided Indian politicians into warring camps, where before they were united in their efforts to win freedom.

—23 December 1920, *New India*

## “MUDDLE-HEADED DIPLOMACY”

Gandhiji has spoken out strongly in the past against exploitation of Labour, but is absolutely silent on the point today. He himself is “thinking furiously night and day,” as he confessed to Rabindranath Tagore, but cannot yet evolve a formula which will meet the requirements of the situation. Commercial interests in Bombay are apprehensive that the inauguration of a campaign of Civil Disobedience will do serious damage to trade and industry. But Gandhiji will be false to his reputation if he listens to counsels of prudence and wisdom. Violence is in the air, he writes with perfect nonchalance, and may burst out through a channel that he may create for it in Civil Disobedience. Apparently, he has altered his outlook since the days of Chauri Chaura, when he confessed his Himalayan blunder and suspended the movement. If, on the present occasion, there should again be violence, the responsibility will not be his, he pleads in

advance He would be performing only a useful service in bringing it to the surface With his critics he argues The Congress having passed the Independence resolution, is he to remain quiet? The Calcutta resolution, which he put into effect at Lahore, was drafted by himself when he was "muddle-headed," he said, in the early hours of a morning, it was "clumsily worded," and, further, was based on "diplomacy which stank in his nostrils" How did such a resolution become sacrosanct at Lahore? Was it not because of his inability to come to terms with the communal and Communist elements in the Congress that he chose the path which leads to destruction?

—30 January 1930, *New India*

## **"THEY WHO SHOULD HAVE BUILT.. "**

Then followed the unhappy year, 1920, in which Mr Gandhi launched the ruinous Non-Cooperation movement, the source of all our subsequent troubles, dissensions, and hatreds, and the ultimate ruin of the Congress as a representative of the Nation, [wrote Dr Besant in *New India*, tracing the attempt to formulate a Constitution for India]

The first two and a half months were utilized by the National Home Rule League in explaining the Reform Act, the powers it gave and the defects from which it suffered But the formation of the Khilafat Committee, and the later identification of its propaganda with that of the Congress, the special Congress of September, adopting the Non-Cooperation programme, the Boycott of Courts, Councils, and Colleges, etc, drawing the youth of the country, by their enthusiasm and patriotism, into roads of theatrical demonstrations accompanied too often with violence, the enrolling

of them as volunteers in a conspiracy to break laws in futile and foolish ways ; the making of promises impossible of fulfilment and thereby bringing about their present apathy and cynicism and the blunting of their noblest feelings and aspirations , all these things gave a melancholy setback to the march of India towards Freedom and made the full success of the Reform Act impossible The wreckers, by their violent language, captured the mob, who inevitably translated the violent language into violent acts Home Rule propaganda was sorely weakened, as its steady quiet work was despised amid the constant excitements of the hate campaign, and the melodramatic appeals to the passions of the crowd, with the promises of *Swarâj* in a year

In 1920, a little circle formed the 1921 Club in Madras, its name indicating their hope of the new era to be opened by the working of the Reforms, with elected majorities in every House The Councils, however, were boycotted by Mr Gandhi's command, and men whose talents would have been invaluable in them were condemned to a futile agitation which had no relation to *Swarâj*, but conducted only to revolution They, who should have built, consecrated their powers to destruction

The success of the Councils, the useful Acts passed by them . convinced the N-COs of the value of the Reformed Legislatures, and they renounced their boycott and entered them, thus giving the most eloquent testimony in their power to the folly of their own previous decision and the political good sense of those who entered them, whom they had branded as traitors to their country, betrayers, and renegades

—11 January 1929, *New India*

## 2. THE GANDHI RAJ

Mr Gandhi is a Dictator and is bound by no laws but his own will. His followers prefer living under his autocracy and the tyranny of his lieutenants to the wide liberty they can now enjoy under the Indo-British Government. It is the nemesis of the British autocracy, "now abandoned" both in theory and in fact, that its subjects, inured to the arbitrary exercise of irresponsible authority, no longer finding it complete enough in British India, seek its shelter in Mr Gandhi's autocracy, unrestricted by any laws.

It enables them to continue to live without responsibility.

—13 February 1922, *New India*

### “SLAVE MENTALITY”

Under the growth of what has been called “slave mentality,” a new and sinister change has taken place. Mr Gandhi has been acknowledged by a number of people as a dictator, whose opinion is to be accepted as supreme. He is hailed as “Commander,” as “General,” and we are all bidden to obey him, on pain of being denounced as unpatriotic, as enemies of the Motherland. Despite the fact that some of his ideas have proved to be impracticable and others to be mischievous, the mass slave mentality marches triumphantly along, denouncing and persecuting all who resist its sway.

But a new and more absurd position has now arisen. Mr Gandhi is announced to be immersed in silent meditation, in order to determine what laws shall be obeyed, and

what laws shall be disregarded. We are not to follow our own consciences but his, and his "Inner Voice" is to be accepted as our law. The "Inner Ruler Immortal" in each of us is to be dethroned to make way for Mr. Gandhi's. Otherwise, we shall be ordered to hold our tongues, or to submit to be howled down. Personally, I have no objection, as I have experienced that intelligent form of opposition before—it is rather a favourite with Bombay youth. They used it against myself when I opposed Non-Cooperation, before everyone, including its author, had found out that it was a 'Himalayan blunder'. However, young enthusiasm though changeable for lack of experience, is, in itself, a beautiful thing. The young will, all too soon, become crystallized.

But Mr. Gandhi is not young, and he ought really to find work more suitable to his age than the breaking of laws which he has long obeyed. Why not choose some harmful law, especially as crude salt is said to contain poison, and he may become responsible for much sickness if people use it?

Suppose that he succeeds in spreading the idea that laws merely as laws should be broken, what can be the only result? The triumph of strength over Justice, of disorder over Order, until the masses of the people—who are always the greatest sufferers from disorder—clamour for a powerful dictator who will give them protection and peace.

We are endeavouring to win Swarâj. But how is the first Swarâj Government to continue to exist, if Mr. Gandhi's policy of promoting anarchy by the casual breaking of laws is to be followed?

### *Swaraj*

This question concerns the whole Indian Nation, and cannot be decided by representatives of the Rump Congress, now supposed to be elected on a farcical basis of a 4-anna franchise without any proof of accurate registration, and excluding the huge majority of the educated classes, and the properly elected representatives of the Nation. We have had some experience of the Gandhi-cum-Congress Raj, under which we find that life, person, and property are not secure, under which the dead are not safe in their graves, under which lawful business is stopped, and streets cannot be traversed without danger of insult, under which women's decency is outraged, their clothing torn off them and men's clothes also are dragged from their bodies and burnt, under which there is no liberty of public speech, under which irresponsible bureaucrats, restricted by laws and customs are exchanged for irresponsible youths, without either manners or outer control. We do not enjoy the change, and we like still less the future, unless this autocracy be broken and India set free to advance along constitutional lines

—13 February 1922, *New India*

### *“THE QUEEREST REVOLUTION”*

Under the Gandhi Raj there is no Free Speech, no Open Meeting, unless for Non-Cooperators. Social and Religious boycott, threats of personal violence, spitting, insults in the streets, are the methods of suppression. Mob support is obtained by wild promises, such as the immediate coming of *Swarâj*, when there will be no rents, no taxes, by giving to Mr. Gandhi high religious names, such as “*Mahatma*” and

“Avatara,” assigning to him supernatural powers, and the like Abraham Lincoln is alleged to have said that you could fool all the people for some of the time Mr Gandhi has certainly succeeded in fooling a part of them He asks for two million spinning-wheels for 2 million families, and later he wants 48 millions The spinning-wheel is the Saviour of India In consequence of unkind suggestions that men could not be clothed by thread alone, he added handlooms, and just now hand-woven cloth is the salvation of India Foreign cloth is boycotted or burnt If there is not cloth enough to go round—and there is not—what there is must be cut up, and each man must have only a loin-cloth, Mr Gandhi promptly sheds his clothes, and goes about in a loin-cloth only Husbands and wives must live apart, to prevent slave children being born into the world Hospitals are “institutions for propagating sin” Doctors try to cure diseases caused by evil-living and so encourage it Railways, machinery, are all bad Man is restricted by nature to move as far as his hands and feet will take him, and he rushes about on railways And so on *ad infinitum* This is Mr Gandhi’s Gospel, as witness his book, *Indian Home Rule* And all this mid-summer madness has caught the fancy of boys and illiterates, and they shout down the rationals When at last, Mr Gandhi took the serious step of calling out millions of volunteers, and bade people pay no taxes, the Government arrested him, tried him in the politest way, and sent him to gaol He now advises people to take up a programme of social work, which raises no enthusiasm after all the excitement, says that all his followers who have gone to prison (for violence of talk or of act) “must be sacrificed,” so that presumably

they will serve out their sentences, and he is devoting himself to learning Urdu. He says that he finds that he cannot control the forces he has raised, and is, presumably, rather glad to be relieved from the necessity of trying to do so.

Most of the large number of Non-Cooperators who are in gaol are there for refusing to give security to abstain from violent language or meetings in forbidden areas. They take up the position that they do not recognize the courts and will not plead. Some of the leaders are there for sedition. Curiously, except for a few newspapers, who rave against the Government, no one seems to be particularly troubled about any of them. The Revolution for the moment is stationary, but Revolutions cannot stand still and live. So far as Mr Gandhi's real followers are concerned—they are a small, well-organized minority, they are honestly non-violent and perfectly harmless, except for their very inflammatory speech, exciting others. They are told no longer to break laws, no longer to "court going to gaol," to produce, sell and buy Khaddar (handwoven cloth). They do so. The Government is justified by this statement implying that they did break laws, and courted imprisonment, and leaves them there. The crowd looks on, and finding no amusement, does nothing, there being no one to lead it into mischief.

It is the queerest Revolution that ever was since Gandhi replaced Tilak, has had the queerest leader, and has now the queerest collapse.

—1922, *The Future of Indian Politics*

## SWADESHI OR BOYCOTT?

One result of the later programmes has been the very regrettable one of mob-violence. Picketing of liquor shops

has been carried out by force, and the general tendency of Mr Gandhi's undisciplined followers is towards mob-tyranny in enforcing the orders of their dictator, now advanced by many to the rank of an *Avatar*! All self-respecting men and women should revolt against an autocracy more searching and more rigorous than that abandoned by the Government. Government autocracy did not interfere with our clothes outside office hours nor insist that women, in the heat of summer, should cook in heavy clothes or else perform their household duties naked. Mr Gandhi's insistence on the boycott of "foreign cloth"—not only British—was forced through by his expressed determination to sever all connection with the whole movement if his behests are not observed. It is not wonderful that the few leaders who capitulated at the Calcutta Congress are one by one deserting the new autocrat Maharashtra, which deserted Mr Tilak's "responsive cooperation," to follow Mr Gandhi's Non-Cooperation, has entirely lost its place as the leader of Nationalism, and we have little active work there.

Another cause of disintegration is the attempted boycott of British goods with the destruction of clothing, so terribly needed by the people—the want of which has led some Indians to commit suicide from shame of their nakedness—this is a counsel which cannot be too strongly condemned. Only the really poor suffer by the bonfires, but their misery is seriously increased. They must take as consolation the answer stated by Mr Gandhi himself to have been made by him to his wife, when she said she could not wear heavy khaddar when cooking, that she might then go naked into his kitchen, or leave, as he would not eat food cooked by

her if she wore other cloth. Thus does the Charka work as the protector of the modesty of Indian women. In Mr Gandhi's address to the weavers of Madanpura appealing to them to give up the weaving of foreign yarn, he apparently forgot that the weavers would be dismissed if they did not weave the yarn supplied to them, and in urging them not to "think that they would be getting low wages by hand-spun yarn, he assured them that they would earn as much as they were earning now," he ignored the fact that the loosely twisted handspun yarn breaks much oftener in a power-driven machine than that which is better twisted and that each break means a loss of time for rejoining the broken threads and the consequent diminution of the amount of cloth produced. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee exhorted the Calcutta Marwaris to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their country, as did their ancestors, but the appeal seems to have fallen on deaf ears and they apparently are more concerned with the revival of trade, hoped for as a result of a good monsoon.

—Speech delivered 29 August 1921, *New India*

I have preached and practised Swadeshi since 1894, my furniture, my clothes, are all Swadeshi. And this I have done for the reason given by Mr Gandhi, "the religious and natural duty of every man for the encouragement of home industries, many of which are nearly ruined for want of encouragement." Mr Gandhi objects to boycott, and though the result is the same, I admit the difference of motive. Swadeshi springs from love of the Motherland, boycott from hatred of Great Britain....

—15 April 1919, *New India*

### 3. SATYAGRAHA “SELF-INVITED SUFFERING”

#### SATYAGRAHA VS. PASSIVE RESISTANCE

The application of the law [Satyagraha], however, as now used against what is called the Rowlatt Act, has caused a curious change of method. The satyagrahi does not directly inflict pain upon himself, but places himself in a position in which the Government inflicts pain on him for breach of a law. Now the Rowlatt Bill was so emasculated by the persistent mangling process carried on by the elected Indian members of the Supreme Legislative Council, that it has been reduced to an Act against revolutionary crimes, instead of, as at first, placing the liberty of every man and woman in India at the mercy of the Executive. Under these circumstances the old-fashioned Passive Resister simply says “There is nothing to break, and Passive Resistance is therefore impossible.” But the Satyagrahi is to break other laws, selected for such breach by a Committee, in order that he may be punished by the authorities, and that this self-invited suffering may set free spiritual force. Will it do so? To my mind it is very doubtful whether it will, however good the motive. For the spiritual world is an orderly world, and the breaking of laws in our physical world—not because the conscience feels the law to be broken to be so bad that obedience to it is disobedience to conscience, but because another person selects them for disobedience—seems to me to be at once illogical and unspiritual, so that the result of

the action is very doubtful I am told that "logic is not everything," but that undoubtedly true statement does not exalt illogicality to the rank of a virtue, nor even make it desirable

Society depends on obedience to law, the worst evil of bad laws is that they diminish respect for law, and the worst evil of the Rowlatt Act is that it substitutes executive force for Law. Hence it seems to me that while the motive of the true Satyagrahi is spiritual, his action is mistaken, his character will improve through his high motive, but his method, of subjecting his civic conscience to the dictation of another, is mischievous, and gravely increases the danger of general lawlessness, already threatening Society in every country, for his example may be appealed to, however unfairly, by the apostles of violence, as justifying their breaches of the law. It is this danger which makes some people condemn resort even to Passive Resistance, with its limited and carefully considered breaking of a special law repugnant to conscience, and a quiet submission to the penalty of the breach. It is this danger which made me call its use "the last weapon of a despairing people." Such is the religio-politico-problem set by Mr. Gandhi to India

—April 1919, *The Theosophist*

The great experiment I mentioned last month, of the Satyagraha movement, has failed, for, as its leader said. "I miscalculated the forces of evil in India." The absence of any clause in the Rowlatt Act that could be broken forced the movement from passive endurance of suffering into active breaking of laws selected for the purpose, with the

object of forcing the Government to retaliate by imprisonment. The Government took no notice, as the breaches of law were unimportant. But the sad and inevitable result of the example set of deliberate law-breaking by the educated, was that predicted by me last month [See Page 103]

The forecast, most unhappily, proved true, for outside the danger of ordinary mob unruliness and violence, the "apostles of violence" asserted their sinister presence, and ere long the Government publicly stated that it was face to face with "open rebellion."

—May 1919, *The Theosophist*

## "THE MAHATMA'S" FASTS

*Later in 1922, of this same debacle of a nation's morale, Dr Besant writes*

Among the repealed laws is the Rowlatt Act—the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919—to give it its proper name. It will be remembered that the whole country protested against this, and, as a Bill, the elected members rejected it, fighting it at every stage. It was against this that Mr Gandhi proclaimed Civil Disobedience (not in obedience to conscience but to the orders of a Committee) and ordered the hartals that were observed all over the country. All this did nothing towards the repeal of the Rowlatt Act, but it demoralized the people. The hartal in Delhi caused a fierce outbreak of mob violence, and the first bloodshed in repressing it, hartals in many places led to the forcible closing of shops and the dragging of people from cars, carriages, and trams, and, in the Panjab, seething with suppressed fury over Sir Michael O'Dwyer's tyranny,

led to the Panjab tragedy, and in Bombay to the tragedy of Ahmedabad, Mr Gandhi then confessed his Himalayan blunder, and helped the Government to stop the rioting in his own town

The worst of Mr Gandhi's confessions, fasts, and penances is that soon after they are over he repeats the offence he bewailed. They are certainly very dramatic, he informs the world that he is going to fast, and says what terrible anguish he is suffering, the N-C O press prints huge headlines, "Mahatma's Penance" and the like. To the reverent mind such a policy is repulsive and theatrical. It is like the non-violence which throws brickbats. With the public mind debauched by two years of exciting promises, always broken, but the breach covered by a new and more attractive one, even more impossible, time after time, the thoughtless part of the populace has been whirled from one excitement to another, and like a child sickened by too many sweetmeats, rejects wholesome food. The Indian Legislature strikes off India's limbs the fetters which have bound her from 1804 till now, but the press proclaims "Mahatma's Fast" and the new Freedom is ignored, while his followers gaze open-mouthed at him.

What good does his fast do to anyone? We suspect that he fasts because he has the superstitious belief that by a few days of physical suffering he can atone for his sin, and get rid of the sense of responsibility. He actually says that God has given him His "third warning". Did he then refuse the first and the second? Evidently, or the third would not have been needed. He will probably treat the third with similar indifference, cause another tragedy, then fast, and so

on, *da capo*, as long as people believe in him. If he were really penitent, he would abandon Civil Disobedience, not suspend it

—16 February 1922, *New India*

What is Mr Gandhi doing? He has spoken of starving himself to death. How will that help India? His duty is to undo what he has done, not to madden the people more by a self-inflicted death. That is a poor way out, and involves no sacrifice, compared with the sacrifice of acknowledging his mistake, freeing his little band of Satyagrahis from their immoral vow, and doing his utmost to help the Government out of the danger into which he has plunged them

—21 April 1919, *New India*

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## WHAT IS TRUE TAPAS?

Commenting on the selling of proscribed literature in Bombay during the rapid development of Satyagraha, Dr Besant said

The sellers are persons who are deservedly very popular in Bombay among the masses, and however meekly they may go to prison, the Bombay crowds are likely to be very much "otherwise." This is the danger against which some of us ventured to warn Mr Gandhi, and now that tapas, with its immense appeal to Indians, has been mixed up with the breaking of laws, an explosive compound has been formed, of which none can see the result. Tapas—the use of fasting, and prayer in temples, masjids and churches—had been suggested to Mr Gandhi by Mrs Besant through Mr Jamnadas, but it was as an alternative, not as an accompaniment.

to the breaking of laws Tapas implies self-control, self-recollectedness, and a mood wholly divorced from violence, breaking of laws implies a mood the very reverse of these, and the open defiance of all laws which have not a moral sanction, on the ground that the Government has forfeited its claim to obedience by its invasion of liberty—the ground laid down by Mr Gandhi at Trichinopoly—means an attempt to force the Government to yield, not to soul-force, but to the fear of riot Soul-force is not evoked by the selling of proscribed literature and the breaking of other laws, and when men are told that it is their right and duty to disobey all laws that have not a moral sanction, and that therefore it does not matter which laws the committee—which they have blindly promised to obey—selects for breach, the very foundation of the bonds which hold Society together is struck at It is because of this that I have written and spoken against this movement, and I deeply regret that other leaders who think as I do on this matter, have left me to speak alone and to face alone the inevitable obloquy Some indeed have condemned all passive resistance—a position impossible to others But Satyagraha is not passive resistance, as Mr Gandhi has honestly said It seems that their reverence for Mr Gandhi personally makes them shrink from condemning openly a movement he is leading To me it seems that reverence for a personality should yield to the supreme civic duty to the Motherland of opposing a general defiance of law, destructive of Society

The only way to establish enduring peace, and to preserve the British connection is to secure the passing of the Reform Bill Therefore I have advocated a temporary

Coalition between all parties who wish to secure racial good-will by enduring peace, and by the connection between India and Great Britain All else should be dropped to ensure the passage of the Reform Bill, and a steady agitation in its favour should here be kept up, while deputations are sent to Britain to support it Athwart this vital work comes the Satyagraha movement, turning popular attention away from the Reforms, drawing away popular leaders from their duty, making them break their promise to go on deputation and to carry on political work, creating a spirit of general lawlessness, defying the Government in order to force them into imprisoning men and women honoured and loved by Indians, imprisonment likely to be followed by riots and bloodshed It is Mr Gandhi himself who says that they want to force the Government into arresting them

As I write, news arrives that he has succeeded as regards himself, by refusing to obey orders not to go to Delhi or the Panjab, but to remain in Bombay He has sent a message, in which, among other things, he says that he does not think we shall "gain salvation by reforms If he means "freedom" by the word "salvation," it is only to be had by Reforms or by Revolution. Lying down will not help us, that may take us to Moksha but it will not win liberty for India, clothe the naked, feed the starving, give the labourer fair wage and decent housing, educate our masses, uplift the submerged If people keep their vow and go to gaol, till all the leaders are imprisoned, if the followers keep their vow and look on quietly, the Government will also look on quietly, for the back of all political action is broken Active political action brought us to where

we stand, with a Reform Bill in sight. Its cessation means the defeat of all our hopes, and the triumph of British interests over Indian, of autocracy over Responsible Government, of subjection over Liberty

—15 April 1919, *New India*

## 4. THROUGH NON-COOPERATION TO BARBARISM

### NON-COOPERATION IS REVOLUTION

Mr Gandhi forces us back to fundamentals, and in that he does the Indian Nation a great service. There are words that catch the fancy, that sound innocuous, or as implying but a little risk, that suggest a plan so effective, so easy to carry out, if only every one will play his part in the drama, and the denouement is so splendid. A whole Nation united as one, Hindu and Muslim standing shoulder to shoulder as brothers, 315 millions of people of one heart and one mind. What Government can resist their demand? What Government would be mad enough to try? And how little it is that is asked of the Nation, just to sit still with folded arms. To do nothing. Merely not to cooperate with the Government. Could any struggle be more simple, yet more effective? No anger, no violence. The triumph of moral, of spiritual force, in defence of a righteous cause. Mr Gandhi leads the movement, all is well.

Some of us, however, looking into the simple procedure suggested, see in it possibilities of danger, probability of

violence, either a failure because only a few obey the call, or a triumph ending in anarchy Mr Gandhi admits the risk, but says that not to offer a channel by which the deep resentment may flow away is more dangerous than to open the channel to the current If the Government does not yield, the responsibility is on the Government That the Indian Government is as helpless as he is to change the decisions of the Supreme Council of the Allies does not seem to affect him He is always convinced that his view is the right view, and that those who do not agree with him are suffering from a defect in their moral vision , if harm comes of his view and his method of enforcing it, the responsibility is not his

Argument being futile, one betakes oneself to the careful consideration of his project One comes to the conclusion that step No 1<sup>1</sup> does not matter, and is even useful as a test of sincerity Such tremendous promises of devotion to

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<sup>1</sup> Looking over the country we see signs of good omen for those who work for ordered Freedom The Cooperation Movement is growing stronger and more united, while that of Non-Cooperation is disintegrating This is partly due to the declaration by Mr Gandhi that the country is not fit for the three dangerous parts of his original fourfold programme which was to give *Swarâj* in a year—the paralyzing of Government by the resignation of all paid civil officials, of the police and the soldiers, and the non-payment of taxes If Mr Gandhi had been strong enough to lead the people to carry out these, he would have made a revolution Fortunately, they imply sacrifices which the people were not prepared to make, as was shown by the failure of the first step, the giving up of honorary posts under Government and of titles, to be made from August 1, 1920 —A B

death have been pledged, such tremendous assertions that 315 millions of people are behind the demand have been made, that one willingly awaits the beginning of the proof by comparatively easy performances Step No 2 means, if successful, the paralyzing of the Government administration, a collapse of the civil Government, in fact If it succeeds, Government ceases to exist One need hardly go further We should never reach step No 3 There would be no posts, no telegraphs, little transport, no courts, the whole machinery would be stopped How this would affect the Supreme Council or the Khalifa, no one explains How it would affect India, who is in no wise to blame, is obvious

A result so tremendous gives us furiously to think If Non-Cooperation with Government means this, to begin with, what is the real fact as to Cooperation? We begin to realize that Cooperation between the people and the Government is the very basis of Society, and that without it, Society ceases to exist, and is reduced to a mob of individuals, law disappears, order vanishes, the strongest rules, anarchy prevails Out of barbarism man has risen by Cooperation, into barbarism he returns if he adopts Non-Cooperation We realize that this innocent seeming phrase, "Non-Cooperation with Government," is really a declaration of war against Society, it is no moral nor spiritual force, but an appeal to physical force which strikes at the very basis of Society and of civilized life We see that where one man pits his conscience against the law of his day, he appeals really to a moral and spiritual force, he suffers but he does not rend in twain the

social bonds, these continue though he may die, his sufferings appeal, they touch the heart, they arouse the mind, if he be inspired by God and is striking a really higher note, he, or his successors, conquer and Society is lifted higher. But if thousands of men follow this same course, they conquer by numbers not by suffering, they terrify Government into submission by the physical force of their numbers, not by a moral or spiritual appeal. The one is a martyr, the thousands are revolutionaries, the passive resistance of the one becomes the shattering force of the thousands who make Government impossible by refusing the Cooperation on which Society is based.

—May-August, 1920 *New India*

Revolt is the last effort of despair against intolerable wrong. If a Nation is strong physically, and able to fight, the revolt takes the form of armed Revolution. If it is physically weak and unarmed, it might take the form of unarmed Revolution, i.e., of Non-Cooperation. The latter has never been effectively tried, but would obviously, if successful, reduce the Nation—or such part of the Nation as survived hunger and nakedness—to anarchy and savagery. Armed Revolution would be preferable, as involving less suffering and providing for a military dictatorship, which would restore order, as after the great French Revolution. Non-Cooperation is Revolution, and one would not vote for "Revolution in principle, because it would be mere blague unless carried into practice, and its practice would depend on circumstances and the possibility of success. Effective Non-Cooperation would demand a very widespread sense of unbearable wrong, capable of dictatorship, military discipline and obedience,

and a power of suffering, endurance and self-sacrifice of which the normal man is quite incapable. A people who crowd cinemas, races, football and cricket matches are obviously not groaning under intolerable wrong, and it is silly to talk to them about revolution, armed or unarmed. To involve "only hatred" is to involve the root of all vices. But, more in detail, Non-Cooperation rapidly and inevitably descends into boycott, social ostracism, denial of freedom in speech or action to all who do not agree with the violent minority, and ultimately a far more intolerable condition than the present, it will pass into looting, rioting, and murder.

—23 December 1920, *New India*

Revolution may sometimes be justifiable, may be inevitable, may be brought about by intolerable suffering, by intolerable oppression. All we desire to press here is that the refusal of Cooperation is a deliberate paralyzing of Government, and that it ought only to be suggested with the same calculation of forces, the same balancing of resources, the same recognition of responsibility, as the decision to make a revolution. It is not a matter for wild excitement and frenzied platform exhortation, but one for a council of war and the perfecting of a civil and military organization.

Those who are not prepared for this tremendous responsibility had better not indulge in this camouflage of words, but try to realize what they are doing and asking others to do. They are undermining the very basis of Society with singular light-heartedness and irresponsibility. The first step

is already taken by a few Let all at least think before they take the second

—May-August 1920, *New India*

And when Mr Gandhi's "civil disobedience" threatened law and invited riot and repression, I flung away my popularity to oppose him, and strove in England to improve the then unsatisfactory reforms, and, with many other Indians, helped in widening them and in making them a substantial step towards Home Rule, equally for this, I have fought unflinchingly since April last against Non-Cooperation, the great disruptive movement engineered by the Lords of Darkness against the union of Britain and India as the day of their partnership was rapidly approaching, and that promise of the World-Commonwealth, the dawn of the Indo-British Commonwealth, was on the horizon, the Commonwealth which means World Peace and World Prosperity, and the spiritualizing of Humanity The desperate struggle which is to decide the destiny of both countries is proceeding, and they will either march forward hand-in-hand for the uplifting of the world, or, torn asunder, will lose their place of leadership—Britain to sink into a second-rate Power, and India to pass into an era of invasion and spoliation, the helpless prey of the northern Asia tribes from which the strong shield of Britain and her own British-trained warrior sons now protect her

—December 1920, *The Theosophist*

## A REVERSION TO ANARCHY

I believe that Mr Gandhi's proposal of Non-Cooperation with the Government, with his fourfold programme of successive stages, and his hope thereby to paralyze the Government and thus to compel its submission to his view of its duty, is wrong in principle and will be disastrous to the country in proportion as it is carried out

In principle, it is (i) revolutionary Mr Gandhi proposes to "paralyze" the Government, to render it powerless, unable to govern The fact that he does not propose to kill its members does not alter the fact that he is striving to bring about a Revolution, for, whether you kill the Government with machine-guns or by paralysis, the end is the same You overthrow the Government At first, Mr Gandhi proposed to substitute nothing in its stead, now he goes a step further, and says that the people should go to their own courts, form their own police for preserving order, and, presumably, pay taxes to support them

(ii) Non-Cooperation stirs up hatred between Government and people, setting the people against the Government, which Mr Gandhi describes as wicked and cruel In addition to this, it stirs up race-hatred Its popularity is due to the fact that large numbers of Indians feel bitter resentment against the Government on account of the Panjab atrocities, the people feel helpless in the face of the Government of India's inaction in dealing with the peasant officers, as the Imperial Government bade them to do The people see in Non-Cooperation a channel for their resentment, and eagerly seize it The stirring up of race-hatred, is, if possible, more

immediately dangerous than hatred of Government, and we have already seen one murder of an unarmed Englishman by four Mosalmans armed with swords. The two who are arrested say that they committed the murder because of the Khilafat speeches. Such result was foreseen and, if Non-Cooperation is accepted as a principle, this one assassination will be the forerunner of many. It is no excuse to say that the murderers were bad characters, violence finds its tools among ignorant fanatics, not among high-principled men. It is all very well for Mr. Gandhi to say that he feels no hatred against the Government he denounces, but only "absence of affection", he may paralyze and yet be free from hatred, but those who follow him do not share his passivity, nor his self-control.

(iii) Non-Cooperation strikes at the foundation of Society which is based on Cooperation and can only exist through continued Cooperation. It means a reversion to anarchy, a violent breaking of all the mutual ties which bind men together. It will inevitably lead to rioting and bloodshed, which can only have one result—repression and the putting off of all improvement in our civil conditions.

In practice, if I may be excused an Irish bull, it is impracticable. The moment a programme is proposed, the unanimous approval of "Non-Cooperation in principle" becomes a jangle of negatives against Non-Cooperation in practice. The political candidate refuses to boycott the Councils, the lawyer refuses to abandon his practice, the parent declines to withdraw his children from school and college, an immense majority of title-holders and men in honorary posts refuse to surrender them. After twenty-six days

of proposed action in the Madras Presidency, 22 men had surrendered titles and honorary posts. The only point on which unanimity exists is in advice from those who have not to others who have, to make sacrifices. If such an infinitesimal result accrues, where the sacrifice is comparatively trifling, what will be the microscopic result when the second stage is reached and men are asked to surrender their livelihoods, and throw themselves and their families on the streets? Apart from Mr Gandhi's programme, it is obvious that Non-Cooperation with Government implies an abandonment of all the conveniences which Government supplies. No one can buy a stamp, nor send a telegram, nor travel by train, without contributing to the support of Government. No one can bring or defend a civil suit, nor register a document, without contributing to the support of Government. If courts are closed by Non-Cooperation, no redress can be had for assault, or robbery, or swindling, or forgery, or any other crime against person or property. Crops will perish for want of irrigation from Government-controlled canals. Famine will result from the stoppage of the transport of goods. Prices will rise yet higher from the same cause. Happily, the common-sense of the people will prevent them from rushing to destruction along the road opened to them. A very small number of the educated classes, judging by present appearances, will accept Mr Gandhi's programme, though they will applaud him vociferously and cover him with inapposite and irrelevant praises for his saintliness, and profess unlimited reverence for him—strictly in principle.

People say, what will you propose in exchange? If I oppose a plan which leads to inevitable disaster and hopeless

failure to attain its end, the fact that it is in itself ruinous and useless, is sufficient justification for the opposition I see no immediate remedy for the Panjab atrocities, and, I say so honestly, I see no way for a real remedy short of Home Rule, and I would work the Reforms to the utmost so as to lessen the dangers of foreign rule I would cooperate with the Government in all useful activities which would lessen poverty, improve industry, conserve the resources of the country for the country I would utilize every scrap of power which the Reforms Act gives, and by such success gain more, and so advance quickly towards Home Rule I see no other way, and believing that the Non-Cooperation movement impedes our progress to Home Rule, may indefinitely delay its coming, and in any case, by dividing the efforts of the people, weakens their power, I oppose Non-Cooperation as fervently and persistently as I work for Home Rule —Looker-On, quoted in *Gandhian Non-Co-operation or Shall India Commit Suicide?* (1921)

## THE FARCE OF NON-COOPERATION

The Non-Cooperation problem has entered a most peculiar phase Non-Cooperation in principle and Cooperation in practice The constant hammering of a handful of speakers and writers on the absurdity and impossibility of practising Non-Cooperation has had its effect on the public mind The arguments have so filled the mental atmosphere that the advocates of Non-Cooperation use them unconsciously in favour of their contention that a general programme is impossible unless the collective wisdom of the National Congress can evolve something more acceptable than its

constituent organizations can evolve. If a few dozen people cannot agree on a programme of action, there seems no likelihood that a few thousands will exhibit more uniformity—in fact, the probability is the other way. It seems likely that the Congress will pass an abstract academical resolution, accepting the principle of Non-Cooperation, and will pass a second resolution of the nature of the Amritsar compromise, which each man can interpret in his own way.

At the Madras Provincial Congress Committee a resolution was passed by a majority approving Non-Cooperation "in principle," but every resolution proposing a definite "programme," or fragments of a programme, was rejected. The Committee therefore approves the principle, but disapproves the practice—a singularly infructuous decision, which paralyzes Non-Cooperative action instead of the Government. Non-Cooperation could not be practised in its entirety—that would be too inconvenient, everyone must draw the line somewhere. Mr Gandhi drew *his* line at travelling by train, and so cooperated in making a large revenue for the Government, the speaker drew *his* line at boycotting the Councils, had he not the same right to draw lines as had Mr Gandhi? There was no logic in politics. Another disapproved of boycotting the Courts, another of boycotting the schools and colleges. And so it went on. Finally every programme resolution was boycotted, and the principle was left high and dry.

Non-Cooperation with the Government means that you set out to "paralyze the Government," and therefore must not help or support it in any way. You must not go by train, use post or telegraph, hold any Government office.

paid or unpaid, seek redress at any court, register any document, accept protection from policeman or soldier, pay any tax Other proposals are a social boycott of Government officers and of all Britons—even of those who cooperate with them—an industrial boycott of British goods, and so on There are no lengths to which some people are not prepared to go (in words) to show their resentment and hatred The real attraction of the movement is, I think, that it is a channel for resentment without entailing much loss or danger, unless you accept a programme The really honest Non-Cooperators accept a definite programme and are prepared to carry it out Most talk big and act little

Is it legitimate to pass a resolution approving “the principle of Non-Cooperation”? No one who knows the history of Nations can deny that a Nation in bondage has a right to break its bonds, if the majority so wish There is no right in one Nation to rule another which is unwilling to be so ruled, no right resides in the strength of a large Nation holding down a small one, a sword is not a legitimate sceptre The right to revolt against a foreign yoke, or even against a home tyranny, has been asserted successfully in English, Scotch, French, Italian history, to say nothing of the American Revolution or the late War No democrat can deny it If a Government may, theoretically, under certain circumstances, be overthrown by force, so may it theoretically be overthrown by paralysis An unarmed weak Nation, finding its Government intolerable, may wholly withdraw itself, leave the Government isolated, with nothing to govern and no power to administer But just as it is silly to assert the right to make a Revolution and create a street riot, so

It is silly to assert the empty right to Non-Cooperate, and have a few futile resignations. The Congress by passing such a resolution will only make the Nation ridiculous in the eyes of the world.

But it is important that everyone should understand that Non-Cooperation is a revolutionary method, as much as taking up arms. Attempts to transform Government by reforms are constitutional, to destroy a Government whether by machine-gun or paralysis is revolutionary, and to assert an empty right to kill by guns or by paralysis, when you can do neither, is childish. India should not lower herself in the eyes of the world by such empty assertions that she cannot carry out. Cannot? Yes, cannot, because her people are not sufficiently united nor sufficiently in earnest to make the sacrifices necessary to win freedom by a sudden leap. Mr Montagu never spoke truer words than when he said "When India is determined to have Home Rule, she will have it." Meanwhile, empty, useless resolutions are not consistent with her self-respect or her dignity—*The Leader* (1919) quoted in *Gandhian Non-Cooperation or Shall India Commit Suicide?* (1921)

How different a sight is presented by the Councils with their respective Governments working harmoniously for the peoples' good and these joyous ranks of boys of both Nations mingling as brothers, from the Non-Cooperation movement, motived by race hatred, by the desire for revenge, and intended by very many to wrench away the bond between Britain and India. That mischievous crusade is, I think, weakening. The giving up of titles has been a ludicrous failure. The boycotting of the Law Courts has

been taken up by very few. The boycotting of schools caused a sudden, excited exodus in Aligarh and Calcutta, but in both places nearly all the boys have returned to school and college. No other places have been seriously affected but the preaching of disobedience to parents and general breaking of discipline has entirely demoralized the students. They break up public meetings, abusing speakers in foul language and using physical violence, blows, and kicks. The most respected public men are not allowed to address a public meeting, schoolboys and young collegians shouting them down, and creating a pandemonium by stamping, yelling, blowing whistles and horns, and shouting "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai!" Mr. Gandhi, having failed with most of the intelligentsia, is now beginning to stir up the masses, who have real grievances, and are easily inflamed. There lies the danger-point at present.

—March 1921, *The Theosophist*

## "IN DEFIANCE OF EXPERIENCE AND COUNSEL"

After weeks of "furious thinking day and night, in search of a formula, Gandhiji has at last evolved one which is embodied in the resolution on Civil Disobedience passed by the Working Committee of the Congress. The movement is to be confined to those who accept non-violence as a creed, and the Congress as a whole will have no greater responsibility for its conduct than that of an interested but passive spectator. Singularely little news came through the heavy veil of secrecy which surrounded the proceedings of

the Working Committee at Ahmedabad, but it is at least clear that even in the Working Committee, the members of which were all selected at Lahore by Gandhiji and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the Cabinet plan, there was some doubt expressed as to the wisdom of rushing ahead. The terms of the resolution, which were drafted by Gandhiji himself, entrust him with the powers of a dictator. Civil Disobedience is to be started by him, with the assistance of his closest followers, "as and when they desire and in the manner and to the extent they decide." At a later stage, when the movement has made a definite commencement, it is realized that the distinction now drawn between those who accept non-violence as a creed and those who regard it as a mere policy, cannot be maintained. The Working Committee therefore hopes that, "in the event of a mass movement taking place," lawyers and students will withdraw their co-operation from the Government and throw themselves into the struggle. It is futile, perhaps, to point out the glaring inconsistency of the formula, because Gandhiji is unimpressed by a charge of that description. Recently, in the course of an article in his paper, *Young India*, on "My Inconsistencies," he propounded the interesting theory that a man of his position was entitled to such a luxury. But lesser mortals than he cannot help observing with some anxiety that when the mass movement has developed, "all those who are rendering voluntary cooperation to the Government" may not belong to the school which accepts non-violence as a creed, or even as a policy. However much the Working Committee may enjoin complete non-violence, there is a considerable body of men in the country who look upon it

as childish and absurd Gandhiji had ample evidence of it at Delhi in the bomb outrage on the Viceroy's train, and at Lahore in the formidable opposition to the resolution condemning it

The movement for Non-Cooperation failed in 1922, in spite of the more favourable circumstances under which it was started. There was not, then, a movement frankly abjuring non-violence, challenging Gandhiji's principles and leadership, such as the organized one which is to be found in many parts of India today. The Muslims as a community threw their entire weight on Gandhiji's side as a protest against the terms of the Turkish Treaty. Can he claim, now, even a fraction of that allegiance? Moreover, there was over the whole country, a wave of bitter anguish, caused by the Amritsar Tragedy. The history of the Reforms, subsequent to the collapse of Non-Cooperation, may be summed up in a phrase, the steady hardening of opinion in England and the ascendancy of reactionary forces at the India Office. If the country has been able to effect a partial recovery from the disastrous after-effects of the failure of Gandhiji's movement, it must be attributed to the unity of all parties, achieved first on the boycott of the Simon Commission and then over the Nehru Report. But Gandhiji has no use now for that unity, built up amidst difficulties and after much toil. The Nehru Report is scrapped, and the problem of inter-communal unity must wait, for its solution, the establishment of "Purna Swarâj."

Regrettable as is Gandhiji's decision to inaugurate a campaign at this stage which must, for all his precautions, result sooner or later in outbursts of violence, and therefore is

doomed to failure, on other grounds it is equally open to criticism He laid down at Lahore that appreciation of the Viceroy's efforts to bring about an honourable and friendly settlement of the Indian problem was a vital consideration with him Since then, while stressing complete Independence as his immediate objective, he has not ceased to hope for participation in the Round Table Conference, and recently put forward eleven points before the Government, on the acceptance of which he would pledge the Congress to cooperation He is willing to see what the Liberals and other parties which believe in the Conference bring as a result of their labours He cannot conceal his anxiety that the forces of violence will come to the surface And yet, with so much to lose, with the prospects of failure writ large on his campaign, he must take the plunge, in defiance alike of past experience and the counsels of those who have been his colleagues for many years

—20 February 1930, *New India*

Now I have opposed Non-Cooperation from its palmy days of triumph when its crowds hissed at me on the platform, drowned my voice with motor horns and other relevant arguments of Non-Cooperation, and I oppose it now, in the day of its revival I regard it as a setback to all sane political activity, and as inevitably resulting in violence and bloodshed, despite its talk of non-violence I argued against it in the Congress, but the partial failure of the loud speakers made it impossible for large numbers to hear me Bengal has changed since the days of its greatest leader, Deshbandhu C R Das, and emotional, inexperienced youth is predominant Sane political action is contemptuously

rejected, and unbridled language and threats of violence rule the day. With this part of this Congress, Mr Gandhi is unpopular, as it objects to non-violence.

—3 January 1929, *New India*

## 5. THE VIOLENCE OF “NON-VIOLENCE”

The Non-Cooperation movement has produced an unparalleled crop of hatred, violence, and lawlessness, as all of us who have lived through it know.

—April 1924, *The Theosophist*

### THE RAVENING WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

The tendency to violence is distinctly the result of the stirring up of hatred against the Government by the continual attacks on it as Satanic, inhuman and bloodthirsty by the three leaders of the Non-Cooperation Party, imitated by the more vocal among their followers. It is useless to blame the Governments concerned in stopping rioting when ignorant and youthful crowds express in action the hatred and contempt expressed in words by their most responsible leaders. Ever since this movement began, I have pointed out that, despite the sheep's clothing of non-violence, the ravening wolf of violence could be seen through its cape. The forecast has proved true in many cases where the rioting was on a small scale, and was quickly prevented from spreading. It is now proved on a large scale by the revolt

of the Moplas on the West Coast—a revolt which is likely to break up the Hindu-Muslim Entente—which began in a peaceful and beneficent form in the Congress-League Scheme but has been converted into a danger to public safety by being diverted into the Khilafat agitation, with its unfairness and constant menace to peace, and threats of helping an Afghan invasion When Mr Yakub Hasan was imprisoned on the refusal to execute a security bond, I pointed out the danger of his addressing a peculiarly excitable population I was rebuked and told that the Moplas were now, under the calming influence of Non-Cooperation, a peaceable and law-abiding population I happened to know that some years before the Hindus had petitioned for the retention of a military camp in the district, because of their fear of another Mopla rising, and had been warned of this constant danger by well-informed inhabitants of the Mopla area I therefore supported the Government in their refusal to allow inflammatory speeches in the district Dropping lighted matches in a powder magazine is not a desirable occupation The outbreak in Cochin emphasized the danger, and now we have what is practically a revolt of a whole community Will the lesson be lost on the speakers who inspire fierce hatred of the Government? It seems doubtful, as we already see suggestions that the Government will follow the example of the Amritsar tragedy There is no justification for the suggestion, for the Amritsar mob did little harm compared to that done by the Mopla fanatics, and its outrages were confined to a single day and the city had been quiet for a whole day before General Dyer and his troops arrived Indian papers edited by Englishmen and Hindus

might at least remember that it is their own people who are jointly attacked by the Muslim fanatics. It is their own people whom the Governments are striving to protect. They might at least withhold criticism till life and property are secure. But hatred of the Government is stronger than the lives of their own. But this uprising is naturally weakening the Non-Cooperation movement by demonstrating its danger — Address to the Reform Conference, 29 August 1921, *Speeches and Writings of Annie Besant, 3rd Edition* by G A Natesan

The non-violence of Mr Gandhi wins no real response from the Muslim, indeed Moulanas Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali always frankly said so. The alliance between an essentially militant Faith with its centre of allegiance outside India, and the non-violent Non-Cooperation of the Hindu ascetic has always been an unnatural one and was confessedly a temporary one. It has come to an end amid the terrible riots of the present year and the Muslim claim to dominate in the Panjab. Hinduism is essentially a non-proselytizing and non-aggressive religion, Islam is essentially a proselytizing and aggressive religion. If Hinduism is to imbibe the latter spirit no peace in India is possible.

—October 1923, *The Theosophist*

## **GANDHIJI'S "SOUL-FORCE" !**

The centre of the great struggle is now shifted to India, and the ghastly hate incited by Mr Gandhi is the mark of the activity of the enemies of mankind. He is becoming more and more violent, and now speaks of "when we draw the sword". Failing among the educated and the mature,

he now carries on a destructive propaganda among the immature, stirs up youths to disobey their parents and teachers, seduces them from the great institutions built up by patriotic Indians by long years of sacrifice. He specially denounces the Musalman University of Aligarh, the Hindu University of Benares, and the Sikh Khalsa College, calling for the destruction of these three, "at all costs." He seems to be madly set against education, wishing the youths to devote themselves to violent propaganda. They attended my Bombay lectures, on November 3rd and 4th by hundreds, on the first occasion, it was possible to deliver the lecture between the interruptions, but on the second day, the first day's proceedings having been reported to Mr Gandhi, who was in Bombay, and not having been disapproved by him, they increased their numbers, and kept up an incessant uproar by stamping, yelling, clapping and blowing whistles, through which it was impossible to speak, so after three-quarters of an hour the chairman dissolved the meeting. This is Mr Gandhi's idea of "soul-force," and his method of educating youths in citizenship. It is easy to see whether he is leading them.

—November 1920, *The Adyar Bulletin*

## THE DEATH-BLOW TO THE CONGRESS

Things went fast during the year 1920, and controversy grew bitter. For Mr Gandhi had launched the Non-Cooperation movement in the early spring, in order to help the Khilafat Committee, formed to work on behalf of Turkey and the Khilafat, and had rigorously confined it to that one question only. He formulated four distinct steps giving up

of honorary titles, leaving Government service, leaving the Police and the Army, refusing to pay taxes The fifth step added by Maulana Shaukat Ali, was to be the independence of India The four steps were to be taken successively The proposal appealed very little to the Hindus, as they cared nothing for the temporal or spiritual power of the Khalifa, while the Indian Muslims declared that the temporal power as Sultan was necessary to the integrity of the Khilafat, as only a Sovereign Power could perform the duty of the Khalifa to protect the Holy Places Hence, at the end of May, finding that the Hindus were little attracted, the All-India Congress Committee at Benares added, as reasons for Non-Cooperation, the Panjab atrocities and the inadequacy of the Reforms. Into this Mr Gandhi threw all his power, stating that Swarâj would thus be speedily gained This addition of Swarâj, made by his own initiative, and his "ultimatum" to the Viceroy, to expire on July 31st, failing which, the first step would be taken on August 1st—the others to follow successively one after the other, the next being taken up as soon as the preceding one had failed—raised immense enthusiasm and carried all before them The idea of Swarâj, gained by successive boycotts of Government, fascinated those who did not stop to ask whether an adequate response would be made to the proclamation, and the Special Congress of Calcutta was held in wild excitement, all opposition being violently interrupted it formulated various boycotts—of Councils, Courts, Colleges, English goods, etc., and this although Mr. Gandhi preached non-violence, and had condemned earlier in the year, boycott as a form of violence Many delegates left the Congress

in disgust over the denial of free speech, but finally a poll was taken among those who remained and Mr Gandhi triumphed. To refuse to obey the Congress "mandate" was to be a traitor to the Motherland, and while non-violence was preached from Non-Cooperation platforms, the violence of the language used by Mr Gandhi and his lieutenants was translated into violence of action. The latter was always repudiated by Mr Gandhi, but the disapproval was disregarded, since he continued to inflame the passions of his audience and his readers by the unmeasured violence of his own speech. The movement took on the revolutionary character which was its own logical sequence, and the boycott of goods became the boycott of persons. Mr Gandhi was made dictator, and all power centred in his hands, he declared "war" on the Government, the Government was to be "brought to its knees," "paralyzed," "destroyed."

The result was deplorable, social relations with the disobedient were boycotted, they were driven away from wells and food shops, hartals were enforced by threats, things went from bad to worse, meetings were broken up by violence, and free speech disappeared from public platforms, funeral processions were assaulted, corpses were thrown down, even dug up and mutilated, men, women, and even children were assaulted in the streets, shops were looted and burnt, policemen were murdered, sometimes with shocking cruelty, unspeakable punishments were inflicted by Non-Cooperation Panchayats on men and women, riots and bloodshed occurred, disobedience of law, merely because it was law, became widespread, and threatened general anarchy. At last Government,

instead of being paralyzed, was unobliging enough to become active, and declared Responsive Non-Cooperation. The violent side of Non-Cooperation has consequently disappeared. The failure of its various methods has led to the withdrawal of its leading men, and most of the names of the present leaders of the extreme left are unknown outside their own localities, though the Non-Cooperation Press decorates them with high-sounding titles.

Non-Cooperation has now become admittedly lawlessness. Mr C Rajagopalachariar, the best-known of the new set, who edits Mr Gandhi's journal, has just issued a pamphlet in which he writes "Obedience to law has been the rule in the case of all the legitimate prohibitions and orders, and disobedience has been the exception. It is time we adopted a different policy and gave battle to Government." The first sentence describes the condition of all civilized Nations. The second sentence—to which we add another that precedes and explains it "The Government should be compelled to realize that we obey or disobey according to our decision"—is anarchy. The "our" is left vague. The hollowness of the Non-Cooperation movement is shown by the results of Mr Gandhi's imprisonment. When he was acclaimed by tens of thousands, it was said the Nation was with him. When few, except the editors of the Non-Cooperation Press, protest against his imprisonment, it is said how great is his influence that the people remain peaceful. They shout his name when they riot, but they do not work for his release. This fork of the road leads to the lawlessness of the mob, caused by the lawlessness of the leaders.

“our decision” in the mob, meaning utter following of their own criminal propensities

As for politics, the present leaders have none Warned by the impossible promises made by Mr Gandhi with the wrecks of which the road of Non-Cooperation is strewn, they refrain from proclaiming Swarâj in a year Congress is broken up by constantly recurring fissions The *Bombay Chronicle* blames the inefficiency of the leaders, but all the efficient leaders have been driven away The bitter prophecy that Mr Gandhi would dig the grave of the Congress has proved true, and the sooner the fragments of that once splendid body are buried out of sight the better It has reached the anarchy to which Non-Cooperation sought to reduce Society, and the “leaders” pride of discipline and obedience, after they have laboured to destroy both Their curses, levelled at law and order, have quickly “come home to roost”

—1923, *A Retrospect and a Decision*

The Non-Cooperation Movement, now abandoned, has wrought fatal harm to Bengal, and has, for the time, robbed her of her old place in National politics

—February 1925, *The Theosophist*

There appears to be some hope of the revival of healthy political life in this country, after the setback it received from the Non-Cooperation movement A plan of definite advance in the direction of Home Rule, to be carried out through the Legislatures, is being discussed, and I hope that it may bear good fruit Steady and rational political work has been pushed from the field by theatrical bonfires,

exciting picketing, "Swarâj in a year," varied with occasional rioting

—October 1929, *The Theosophist*

## FROM ANARCHY TO MARTIAL RULE

In 1919, when first the idea of passive resistance was mooted in connection with the Rowlatt Bill, I wrote in this journal some articles on "Law," seeing the dangers which would follow if the idea spread of breaking laws, hitherto obeyed, at the orders of a Committee. Any student of history knows the peril of the spread of the spirit of lawlessness in a civilized community. The removal of quarrels from the arbitrament of force to that of the Courts of Law is the measure of civilization in every country. It is the protection of the weak against the strong, the maintenance of order against violence. Hence good citizens, as I pointed out in 1919, if compelled by conscience to break any particular law, were always careful meticulously to acknowledge the supremacy of law, and willingly to submit themselves to the penalty attached to the breach of the special law they disobeyed. Organized disobedience of laws, arranged by a Committee blindly to be obeyed, in order to "discredit the Government," is a crime against the Nation far greater than that of armed rebellion, greater because it strikes at the very foundation of social security, whereas the leaders of the armed rebellion enforce law in the regions they occupy, and if they seek to destroy a Government they sternly maintain order by Martial Law in the part of the land they control.

I also pointed out at the time, and have repeatedly reiterated the warning, that the flouting of civil authority would encourage the criminal classes, and increase crimes of violence Civil law may be superseded by Martial Law in times of upheaval, but that is only the substitution of sterner, sharper, swifter Law for the Civil, in order that the prevalence of violence within a disturbed area may be checked, and general disregard of Law may not prevail But no warnings from any source availed against the spread of the spirit of anarchy Youths were urged to disobey their parents and teachers, to disregard any orders of Magistrates or of the Government, and to prove their patriotism—Heaven save the mark!—by flouting any order issued by the Civil authority, that conflicted with their methods of enforcing their own usurped authority over the citizens who did not acknowledge it

The natural results followed Not only did many riots break out as a result of picketing, of assaulting people in the open street who did not wear the clothing or the head-gear approved of by the youthful sumptuary authorities, of the setting on fire of liquor shops, or violently robbing people of liquor they had bought, of assailing the police and provoking tumults against them, but the spirit of lawlessness spread among the normal criminal class and the potential criminal class which fringes it, and the small riots of the N-COs were reinforced by these lower social strata, who took the opportunity presented to them by the normally respectable classes to carry on their war against Society As the police were more and more employed to protect the property and freedom of action of persons

who carried on trades banned by the "volunteers," their vigilance was necessarily diverted from their usual duty of preventing crime, and hence crimes of violence, dacoities thefts, largely increased in numbers. Attacks of armed dacoits on villages have become numerous, assaults on individuals have multiplied, convicts have been rendered more insubordinate, and the respect for law, which protects social order more than the police, has disappeared. To support "law and order" is to be jeered at, and to be a "good citizen" has become a term of reproach. Any punishment inflicted on those who deliberately flout authority with the intention of provoking arrest, is condemned as "repression." Volunteers were called on to provoke arrest with the proclaimed object of paralyzing the Government, and discrediting it in the eyes of all.

A yet more sinister phenomenon has appeared. When a grievance existed, a real grievance, it was exploited to provoke disturbance. The Lucknow agrarian riots were the first open example of this. Then a reforming party among the Sikhs began to resort to violence instead of appealing to the law against Mahants who were considered to be unworthy of their position. Unhappily the N.C.O. influence prevailed in the Panjab, and the reforming Sikhs embraced its fatal method. The few-inch-long kirpan was turned into a sword, and the reformers organized into bands to take possession of shrines by main force, evicting Mahants they regarded as peccant. Early in their proceedings, a Mahant showed fight, and the massacre at Nankana occurred. The question then arose should reformers and Mahants be allowed to fight out their quarrels while the Government

stood aside and let them murder each other, or should it protect the legal holders of property, and bring about legislation for the reform of abuses ? Government elected the latter plan Yet the N -C O press describes the Akali attempts to take possession of land which is not theirs as a holy struggle ! Religion is used to sanction cutting down another man's trees ! All the exaggerated writing is intended to serve the political purpose of discrediting the Government , it is part of the N -C O campaign

Is everyone who considers that the use of property by its owners is not according to his ideas, to be at liberty to gather a mob, trespass on the owner's property, and destroy his works, or his trees, or buildings ? If so, law is abolished, no one is secure, Government disappears, and only the strong arm rules

It is time that sober-minded people considered seriously the condition into which we are drifting Is Home Rule to be achieved, only to find a country which is in a condition of anarchy, resistant of all discipline, defiant of all authority, where everyone is a law to himself, enforcing his will by mobs, or trampled on by superior force ? Such is the condition to which the N -C O 's are reducing India Good men side with the anarchists because the police meet successive bands of trespassers with lathis Lurid accounts may be written of any street-fight, but organized attempts to seize property by force are resisted by the police in every civilized country Religion is prostituted by being made the pretext of deliberate aggression on the rights of others The N -C O 's are deliberately endeavouring to substitute force for law, and their pretence of non-violence

cannot blind reasonable persons to the reality of their violence

—18 September 1922, *New India*

Has there ever been a popular movement in India which has stirred up hatred and led to such brutal cruelties and oppression? Read the N-C O. Press, with its incessant abuse of all persons who oppose it, its shameless falsifications, its use of violent language inevitably followed by violent acts. Consider the breaking up of meetings by Non-Co-operators, their howling down of speakers, their unburying and mutilating of corpses, their intrusions on death-beds of Cooperators, their pulling off of caps and coats from men in the open streets, and of saris from women. Take the insults shouted at men and women, who deserved honour for their services to India, by callow youths, who trampled on reverence to parents, to age, to patriots who would not repeat their shibboleths, and all to yells of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai!" Take the abominable cruelties inflicted by Non-Co-operation village courts, the picketing accompanied by blows, spittings, looting, firing of shops and violent thefts from purchasers of foreign cloth or liquor. Take the ruinous feelings of hatred spread among the younger generation, such as we have never seen before in India. Or take the more terrible outbreaks, the attacking of police stations, the killing of constables, the firing of houses, and the flinging of cruelly beaten police alive into the fire with petroleum poured on them. And take, worst of all, the general contempt of law inculcated by Mr Gandhi's followers, as when Mr C Rajagopalachari wrote that they should disobey all

laws, good and bad It is idle to say that the huge crop of violence, which practically put an end to public meetings and free speech in India, was not directly due to the spirit of hatred and lawlessness roused by Mr Gandhi's violent language and the epithets he applied to Government, since it is only after his imprisonment and the admitted decay of the Non-Cooperation Movement that those of us who were known as its opponents have been able to hold a public meeting in peace and without facing insults in the streets Some, like myself, have also been financially ruined by it, and have had, when we could no longer increase the debts incurred, to close our schools and colleges, so popular and flourishing before Mr Gandhi began his crusade I have barely managed to keep *New India* alive, despite the crusade against it carried on by the Non-Cooperators

The only useful projects strengthened by him have been the social ones, like village industries, temperance (omitting picketing), swadeshi, the abolition of untouchability The exaggeration of some of these has done harm, such as spreading the absurd idea that wearing khaddar will bring *Swarâj* All the above have been patiently worked for through long years by many, without their accompanying them by all the violence and ill-feeling which have stained the good name of India How illusory has been the result of the last four years was proved when Mr Gandhi was personally absent from the field We have the final result of his movement in the partial wrecking of the Reforms and the local restoration of autocracy, with the cry of mass refusal to pay taxes as a menace in the near future, a probable creator of rioting and bloodshed, unless reason conquers

unreason, and respect for good law replaces the lawlessness caused by Mr Gandhi's movement

—April 1924, *The Theosophist*

Alas for India, if its leaders prefer sentimentality to Justice, and popularity to Right Action! Political prisoners may be safely released, after Home Rule is established. But to deprive the existing Government irresponsible as it is, of all power to strangle an insurrectionary movement, admitted to exist, until a Home Rule Government has taken over the reins, is merely to ensure a period of anarchy, to be followed, as always, by a military despotism, and the disappearance for the time of all hope of liberty

—30 January 1924, *New India*

## MR. GANDHI CHOOSES WAR

Many have been blaming the Government of India for a policy of drastic repression which has not only been unduly severe, but leads nowhere. Such censure ignores the fact that the policy of Mr Gandhi has been deliberately and intentionally provocative and that defiance of law for the mere sake of defiance encourages a spirit of lawlessness among the ignorant and the criminal classes, which strikes at the very foundations of Society. If the present Government permitted this to continue unchecked, they would bequeath to their Indian successors the painful task of reducing to order the chaos they had permitted, instead of handing over to them a well-ordered and law-abiding people.

Moreover, quiet citizens, who form the bulk of the Nation, have a right to demand from their Government protection of their liberty and property, and no Government worthy of

the name could continue to disregard the urgent appeals for protection, which have poured in during the last month and more H E the Viceroy's speech to the Deputation, which waited on him, has shown that not only he, but all the members of his Government are as anxious to avoid repression as is every one in the land No one who heard him could doubt the absolute sincerity and earnestness of his words In reference to the invitation of disinterested intermediaries, His Excellency has indicated a way out of the difficulties, so as to avoid the terrible consequences to which the present policy of the Non-Cooperators must lead He and his Government, in order to create a calm atmosphere for discussion, had expressed willingness to suspend the present policy, but no response had come from those who were disturbing the public peace

The whole responsibility, therefore, now rests on Mr Gandhi and the Non-Cooperators, for the Government cannot remain quiescent in the presence of intimidation and the paralyzing of the peaceful life of the community Mr Gandhi has thrown away a splendid opportunity of stating his policy in the calm and quiet discussion among men of different opinions He might have restored peace to the country and ensured constitutional progress He has chosen the path of law-breaking and revolution, which can only lead to bloodshed and anarchy, and he has made no response to the generous willingness of a powerful Government to listen to himself and his followers Criticism of the policy forced on the Government has been plentiful

It is time to recognize that His Excellency has done all that is possible to open the door to a peaceful settlement,

and while he refuses a futile discussion in the present disorder, he has carefully left the door open, should wiser counsels prevail in the Non-Cooperation camp. We cannot too highly commend the lofty spirit in which he has envisaged the subject, and we still hope that Mr Gandhi may try to emulate His Excellency's generous tone. His Excellency has received from the King-Emperor a solemn charge to uphold law and to defend order. Can any one venture to say that he should be a traitor to his duty, that he should surrender his trust into the hands of those who disturb the public peace and would let loose on the Motherland the forces that are desolating Malabar? Mr Gandhi elects for continuing war [unless there be] an unthinkable surrender of the Government to his arbitrary mandate. Let the consequence of his rejection of an honourable peace lie on his own head.

—(By wire) 22 December 1921, *New India*

## 21 YEARS AGO

The suggestion was made by me in the *Leader* that an informal group of people should, on their own motion, approach H E the Viceroy, and ask him to call a Conference of the leaders of various political schools, and see if some conclusion could be arrived at which would remove the prevailing unrest, and enable steady progress to be made along constitutional roads to the goal of Home Rule, which all progressive and patriotic Indians desire to reach as speedily as possible. It is true that the sudden and enormous changes implied in the popular slogan of the moment are not easily reducible to definite proposals, for

these appear to be petty and mean beside the rosy and golden clouds round a great ideal Home Rule, Swarâj, must be clothed in methods and details, and these are matters for the brain to construct, not for the heart to sing. It is methods and details which Liberals and National Home Rulers have to propose, and these fall coldly on the ear of excited crowds, accustomed to revel in appeals to their emotions, with never a practical word as to the relation between the glowing periods and prosaic drudgery of political work. Young men enjoy the novelty of picketing or urging shopkeepers to close their shops, of making drunks ridiculous. But asked as to how all or any of these bring nearer the day of Swarâj, they only cry "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai!" Yet all the excitement and the great hopes aroused are drifting the country rapidly to the precipice of revolution, below which toss the seething waves of anarchy. The aggravation and persistent provocation of the bulk of the citizens by the noisy, violent interference with their ordinary life, have provoked a reaction against their tormentors, and an angry determination to resist what had become an intolerable nuisance, to resist by violence the violence which hampers their activities. Thus, we are threatened with street brawling between rival organizations, and when Government step in to protect public order, both sides are inclined to unite in crying out against repression.

Under these circumstances, it seems reasonable that some effort should be made to prevent the growth of exasperation, some opening should be given for those who demand immediate Swarâj to state by what means they propose to bring it about. A proclamation by the Congress will not

establish Swarâj. It may produce bloodshed and looting in a particular area, such as followed the proclamation of the Khilafat Raj in Malabar, but that only means a cry for protection from the mass of the people. If the Congress, as was threatened, proclaims a Republic, a few people may refuse to pay taxes to the Government, but they will not pay them to the new officials. The refusal is likely to be followed by the rising of the Have-Nots against the Haves, and these will pay no more attention to the exhortations of the "leaders" than the Bombay crowd paid to Mr. Gandhi.

It seems, then, an opportune time to make an appeal for peace, before actual sporadic war breaks out, and the Government is forced to resort, however unwillingly, to defend itself and the innocent majority from the loosening of all the bonds which hold Society together, by the only means left when law is derided, the last appeal to force.

Let those who declare themselves as the enemies of the present rule formulate clearly their demands, so that those who are in favour of constitutional advance instead of direct action may see if a *modus vivendi* can be found. Let us ask the Viceroy to invite representatives of the opposed views to meet in Conference, and seek a way out of the present dilemma. Two years of unrest and struggle are surely enough. Let common counsel lead us into the path of peace.

Since the above was written, a deputation has waited on the Viceroy, and he replied to the memorial in a frank and sympathetic speech, but was unable to grant our request, owing to the intransigent attitude of Mr. Gandhi, who would not even suspend hostilities for the period during which the preparations for the Conference were made and

the Conference itself would meet. Even commanders on the field of battle agree to an armistice, if there be any hope of peace, while the terms are under discussion. But Mr Gandhi is a law unto himself. On that, however, I wired an article last night, and need say no more. The Viceroy has impressed on us that the door is still open, but we cannot go through it while Mr Gandhi remains obdurate. He chooses war. And I have only to add, what I have steadily repeated, that I stand by the Government of the King-Emperor and the British connection.

—24 December 1921, *New India*

## AS ALWAYS—

### *GANDHIJI'S OBSTINACY*

Great efforts are being made by the N-CO Press to persuade its easily gullible readers that the failure of the attempts to find a way out by a Conference lies on the shoulders of the Viceroy instead of on those of Mr Gandhi. But sophistry cannot change facts, although it may successfully camouflage them for the unwary and the ignorant. Nothing can alter the fact that "civil disobedience" was decided upon on November 4th, and that the notification, which Mr Gandhi pretends was its cause, was issued on November 17th. Nothing can alter the fact that the Viceroy was ready to release all prisoners taken under the notification, if the hartal at Calcutta on the day of the Prince's visit was called off and civil disobedience suspended, not that Mr Gandhi said he made no conditions to Mr Jamnadas Dwarkadas and Pandit Hridayanath Kunzru in Gujerat, and

sent telegrams which outstripped their train to Calcutta, making impossible conditions. As they said, he slammed the door against the Conference. Finding his action disapproved of, some well-known persons call a Consultative Conference, and Mr. Gandhi, who points out that he is not a member, goes to the Conference and shows himself as a dictator of terms to which the Government must submit before he will go to a Conference. The position he has created being one of triumph for himself and humiliation and abandonment of duty by the Government, the Viceroy refuses to accept it. The N.C.O. Press proclaims that the failure is the fault of the Viceroy. Mr. Gandhi, with the airs of a conqueror, sends an ultimatum to be accepted within seven days. The Government replies quickly with a carefully reasoned and irrefutable communication, declining his impossible terms. Mr. Gandhi issues a crafty reply to cover his defeat.

### *The Terms*

What were the terms on which Mr. Gandhi would enter the Conference? The unconditional release of all prisoners, that they might review the situation with him and decide whether they would start civil disobedience or not. Obviously, if they decided to start it, a Conference became absurd. The suspension of hartals and of actual civil disobedience was offered in return for the release of the prisoners. But recruiting for volunteers was to go on, volunteers being persons who have as object the carrying out of the Dictator's orders, aimed at the destruction of the Government! The result of the Conference would therefore be the release of those who had defied the Government,

so that they might take up their old work, the strengthening of the revolutionary party by the enlistment of young men who have been the cause already of much violence and bloodshed, and whom no pledge can bind, the discrediting and humiliation of the Government in the face of the world, and the practical destruction of its authority in India. These, of course, are Mr Gandhi's avowed objects, but can he suppose that the Government is composed of fools who will help him to attain them? How different is this pettifogging attempt to drive a Shylock's bargain with the Government, from the noble generosity of the Viceroy, that there should be no humiliation of either party, no triumph of the one over the other.

—13 February 1922, *New India*

### **“BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM”**

Since the Government published the fact that Mr Gandhi's arrest had been ordered when he had gone to Bardoli to open his no-tax campaign, and had been suspended on his sudden collapse, people have been watching the course of events, feeling that, while the Government had shown unexampled patience and forbearance with his violent abuse, they had obviously determined that there was a limit which they would not allow him to overstep. When he again made a somersault at Delhi, and returned by “modifications” to the pre-Chauri Chaura position, it was evidently likely that his challenge would again be lifted, and that the Government would also revert to its position of stopping his activities. Consequently rumours of his arrest again began to

fly about, and no one would be surprised if it took place. The issue has become one of lawlessness or order, and a lawlessness of increasing menace.

We have read of a large band of armed Sikhs entering a station, refusing to pay for tickets, and seizing the accommodation they required. On their arrival at their destination, the police were not strong enough to stop them, and difficulties were only smoothed away by a rich Sikh, who paid their fares. Again we read of armed "Alikas" bands, belonging to a class below the *Kisans*, parading the United Provinces, challenging the rents of *Zamindars* and threatening violence. In another Province, thousands of *Bhils* appear, and become a menace to the plain-dwellers.

Mr. Gandhi's repeated denunciations of the Government as Satanic, inhuman, bloodthirsty, his encouragement of lads to organize as volunteers and to disregard the orders of the Government and the laws of the State, are bearing their natural crop of bitter fruit, and all the turbulent enemies of Society, as in every Revolution, are coming out of their normal hiding-places, thinking that their time has come. Under these circumstances it is evident that the author of the general lawlessness cannot long be left as the storm centre, despite his nauseating expressions of "affection" for the British people, published in the *Bombay Chronicle* of March 8.

Unfortunately the insults to the Prince of Wales, carried out by his orders in every town the Prince visited, have deeply angered the Nation for which he has so suddenly developed affection, and the result is the strengthening of the reactionaries in Britain, who have long been thirsting

for Mr Montagu's overthrow, India has lost her best friend in Britain, and her champion in the Cabinet. The greater is the need to rally round the Government here. When the choice is between Government and Revolution, anarchy and order, violence and protection, no sane and civilized man should hesitate for a moment. Malabar stands as a result of the Khilafat agitation, nursed and fostered by Mr Gandhi, while the ever-lengthening list of riots and the spread of utter lawlessness, with its accompanying increased number of dacoities and other crimes of violence, are the outcome of the Congress activities ordered by him, the intimidation, the picketing, the outrages on the dead, and the cruelties to women. We desire the "repression" of these crimes by the ordinary laws of the land, for the object of the laws is to repress crimes, wherever they occur.

We want to work for Autonomy in the Provinces, for Responsibility in the Central Government, and this work is hindered by the irresponsibility and violence of Mr Gandhi's followers. They have destroyed civic peace, public discussion, liberty of speech, the right of meeting, and they exercise an exasperating tyranny. All lovers of Freedom will rejoice when their heavy yoke is broken.

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The above was written in Delhi, before the news of Mr Gandhi's arrest arrived, and I have nothing to add to it, after the arrest, except that fact. As shown above, I considered that his yielding to the pressure of the "Civil Disobeyers" at Delhi made his arrest probable, and I regard it as entirely justifiable. As I said before I left Madras, in

the issue between Government and Revolution, New India stands by the Government

—15 March 1922, New India

## THE FRUITS STILL RIPEN

Non-Cooperation has its fair side, which deceives some foreigners, led away by the sweet words of Mr Gandhi, and knowing naught of the violence stirred up by him. Of his fatal movement it may be said that "its words are smoother than butter, having war in its heart." When Mr Gandhi saw its evil fruits, he dropped his civil disobedience programme, and formed one of social reform, to which no one can object. But the fruits still ripen. Its latest, I hope its last work, is the forcing of autocracy on the Central Government, by the refusal of all supplies, and on the Central Provinces, by refusing to form a Ministry, in Bengal it was the largest single party, and also refused to form a Ministry. In the Central Provinces, autocracy has been accepted, in Bengal, the Governor, the Earl of Lytton, took a wiser and bolder course, he pointed out that the Council could not prevent the grants to the departments controlled by the Executive Council, but could withhold them from those controlled by the Ministers, and thus stop all Government grants-in-aid to schools, hospitals, and other useful organizations, so that these would have to close. The Government would go on, but the members could make the people suffer, if they chose. This judicious throwing of responsibility on the right shoulders, has given the Non-Cooperators pause, and it looks as though they would give up their folly. But they have done infinite harm to the

cause of Freedom of India, not only by their denial of liberty of speech and meeting to opponents, and their terrible social tyranny, but by the impression caused in Britain by their unreasonableness and their threats. Let us hope that Britons will be big enough not to refuse Liberty to India because of these, but to realize that the refusal hitherto made, is the direct cause of these follies, just as a similar refusal in Ireland destroyed the Parliamentary Party there and gave birth to the Republican movement and civil war. Let them not repeat that criminal unwisdom in India.

—April 1924, *The Theosophist*

## HATRED—A CHANNEL OF DARKNESS

[As leader of The Theosophical Movement, Dr Besant in 1920 called on its adherents to combat with her this grave menace not only to India's aspirations but to her very spiritual existence.]

This movement for Non-Cooperation is no movement of party politics, to which The Theosophical Society can remain indifferent. It has passed into a phase in which it menaces the very existence of India, her spiritual life, and her spiritual mission to humanity. India, as an original member of the League of Nations, that glorious Herald of the far-off Federation of the World—spoken of, I may remind students, in the book *Man Whence, How and Whither*, India, as a Free Nation among sister Free Nations in the Indo-British Commonwealth, in the realization of which lies the future peace of the world, India, from whom the light of true spirituality shall shine forth for the illumination of the Nations, India, the great Daughter of

the Rishis and Devas, whose immemorial age stretches back beyond the dawn of history—for history tells us of no time when she was not prosperous and wealthy—the contemporary of Babylon the Great, of ancient Egypt, of Greece and Rome in the days of their glory, India, sleeping for nigh two centuries, but now awake and on her feet, this India is now the mark of all the “Powers of the Darkness of this world,” driven back in the West by the downfall of autocracy in Germany, and now turning their defeated, but still tremendous, energy on India, by whose undoing and hurling into chaos the onward march of the world may yet be checked for centuries to come These hosts, ever the enemies of the Lords of Light—called Asuras by the Hindus, Ahriman and his agents by the Zoroastrians, Satan and his angels by Hebrews and Christians, Eblis and his armies by the Musalmans—they have caught hold of this movement of Non-Cooperation, because *it is a channel of hatred*, their favourite weapon, and are pushing its leaders onward, step by step, into wilder and wilder methods The gospel of Tolstoy, so fascinating in its beginnings, but so fatal in its inevitable ending of anarchy, the dragging of all down to the sordid level to which Society had cruelly reduced its producing class, was one of the causes of Bolshevism in Russia That infection has been brought over here by Tolstoy’s disciple, M. K. Gandhi, with all the fascination of its philosophical side and the deadly implications covered by that philosophy, while the masses have not yet become obedient to the Inner Ruler Immortal, the Hidden God in man The profound truth of that God hidden in every man makes the great force of the movement, the ignoring of the truth that God

manifests in His world and works by evolution to prepare men for such manifestation in themselves, is the deadly error which leads to anarchy. Men not yet self-ruled from within, and thus determined to righteousness, must be ruled by Law from without. The destruction of reverence for Law, ingrained in the Hindu religion, the doctrine of "civil disobedience"—the breaking of any law, hitherto obeyed as not against conscience, as a protest against a bad law—was the step which marked the parting of the ways which lead respectively to Freedom and anarchy. It led to the brief madness so cruelly and brutally repressed in the Panjab and, by England's crime in condoning the wicked vengeance inflicted, to the hatred felt against British rule today. Mr. Gandhi at the time saw and confessed the error he had made in forgetting the evil elements in Society. But his penitence was short-lived, and he is now rushing along the downward path. He began comparatively mildly, by a passive withdrawal merely from Government, step by step he went further, and now advocates rebellion of sons against parents while still dependants and minors, and his last panacea, so far, is the celibacy of husbands and wives until India is entirely free. This is obviously madness, and what further devices he may start no one knows.

—November 1920, *The Theosophist*

Because so much lies in the scales of Destiny—no less than the world passing on into peace and happiness, strongly aided by the Indo-British Commonwealth, the model of the World Commonwealth of the future, or the setback of the world for many generations—because of this I call on all students and lovers of Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom, to

range themselves under the banner of ordered and progressive Freedom, and to oppose the threatened anarchy I have no authority to command—for The Society is democratic in its constitution—and can only call from the Watch-Tower, and warn all who are intuitive of the perils in which we stand. If India, the Mother, fails, then will Bolshevism triumph for the time, and spread red ruin over the world. But I believe that she will not fail, that she will recognize her Dharma and take her place in the World-Order.

—December 1920, *The Theosophist*

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[Alas that in 1921<sup>1</sup> Dr Besant should have had to declare that "political unrest and excitement, with the revolutionary movement of Mr Gandhi, have for the moment almost stifled the spiritual life of India"]

## 6. THE WASTAGE OF INDIA'S YOUTH

I am writing in Benares, and we are expecting the invasion of the Destroyers [Mr Gandhi and the Ali Brothers] to seduce the students of the Hindu University to be false to their duty to their parents and their country. I have given two lectures here to crowded audiences on "Cooperation" and "Non-Cooperation, showing the advantages of the one and the ruin consequent on the other. But the fun of tilting against the Government has captured the immature minds of the youngsters who,

<sup>1</sup> 1921 Theosophical Presidential Address

innocent of the ruin involved in Mr Gandhi's subtle proposals, only see the side attractive to all high-spirited youths, of baiting the Government. This same cruel use of youths was made in Bengal against the ill-advised Partition, and resulted in the internment of thousands of students, with the result that Bengal is now in the background void of energy in the political field. The generation that would have been leading Bengal in the van of the propaganda for freedom is broken and dispirited, and there is a gap between the older politicians and the coming politicians, that these should have filled.

—November 1920, *The Theosophist*

## LEADERS MUST LEAD

I object to boys being thrown into political conflicts. They may ruin their whole lives in a sudden surge of excitement, and in their manhood bitterly reproach those who took advantage of their inexperience. A boy dismissed from school or college and refused a leaving certificate, has his education ruined and his future livelihood destroyed.

When people unaccustomed to political action suddenly plunge into it, they are apt to think after they act instead of before. Here lies one of the dangers in India's awakening, and that is why I said I fear it has come too soon. Those who are trained in politics, as in my past life I have been—for I have taken a large part in the political struggles of the people in England, and I worked there in difficult times side by side with my old friend, Mr Charles Bradlaugh—make it, as we made it, one of the rules of political life never to tell another man to go where there was risk, where-

we did not go in front, never to tell a procession to go where there was danger, unless we walked in front, so that we should be the first people on whom blows fell. It was the glory of Charles Bradlaugh, when he lay on his death-bed, that, despite his struggles and difficulties, there was not one home that had been made desolate by him, not one man who had gone to jail for the work that he had asked him to do. The front is the place of the leader, it is the place of the man, and not the place of the boy.

There is another reason why it is bad to send boys to the front. There can be no wise politics without thought beforehand. People who shout first and think afterwards make a mob, they do not make a political party, and that is the thing that the boy does. He shouts and protests. It is bad training for the future. In the college, students should discuss political questions, social questions, and economic questions. They should debate them, discuss them, and talk them over in every possible way. We train them to do that in the Central Hindu College. But we do not allow them to protest against the Government. And the reason is a very simple one. When they have discussed these questions beforehand, when they have talked them over, then, when they have gone out into the world, they will be ready to form rational opinions. But if, before they study and understand the questions of the day, they shout out their approval or disapproval out of empty heads, they make a great deal of noise, but noise of no value, like bladders which, when beaten make a noise, but collapse if you prick them with a pin. I do not want India to work along those lines. Train your boys to think first and then to form

opinions, not to call out first and then wonder what they have been shouting for That is bad moral training It puts boys on wrong lines, and it takes away that profound sense of responsibility which ought to be at the heart of every one who mingles in political life

For remember what playing at politics means Remember that it means playing with property , it means playing with liberty , it means playing with the lives of men Leaders in the political arena have to remember all that, when they take the responsibility of calling men to action

—Lecture delivered 1910, *The Birth of New India*

Mr Gandhi has gained his object and has been arrested and interned He states that he is very comfortable. One may perhaps venture to express a hope that the Government will cancel all the long sentences of simple and of rigorous imprisonment to which the unfortunate lads who have followed him have been condemned by the lower judicial officers It is not just that the leader should be made comfortable, while the followers—clearly the less culpable—have to endure all the rigours of the law I have not the smallest wish to diminish his comforts, though I regard him as the most mischievous man in India, since he undermines respect for law, the foundation of civilized Society But he is sincere, however wrongheaded, and is ready to suffer for that which he believes to be true ...

—8 May 1930, *New India*

The Nehru Report, intended to be the last friendly gesture to Great Britain, has been changed into a threat, by the addition of Mr Gandhi's favourite flourish of Non-Cooperation This probably ensures its rejection, and turns

the pantomime into a tragedy. As usual, it is the young who are thrown to the lions, the foolish, gallant youths of Bengal. The elders escape, and practise in the High Courts under the oath of allegiance, taken with a mental reservation.

—18 January 1929, *New India*

It is a glorious time for the young men and women today, young folk in the fullness of strength and vigour, gazing open-eyed and fearless at the problems of the day, ready to test their strength in the handling of them. If the youth of India were ready, Home Rule would be ours in a very few years, and they would have been ready, following, as youth should, their seniors and strengthening them, had not Mr Gandhi come to India, and proved to be, as Gopal Krishna Gokhale prophesied, the worst enemy of political freedom. But even Mr Gokhale did not foresee how he would demoralize the youth of India, teach them to disobey their parents, revolt against their teachers, desert and despise their natural leaders, and pour out their beautiful enthusiasm and self-sacrifice on the desert sands of hatred and rebellion, instead of on the rich soil of patriotic service, disciplined and guided by those who had brought India to the threshold of Freedom, and would have steered her quickly and safely into the harbour of Home Rule.

—January 1922, *The Theosophist*

## ANNIE BESANT GUARDED YOUTH

[During the time that Dr Besant was in Government disfavour, many students throughout India took it into their heads to demonstrate. On 3 February 1917, she wrote in *New India* ]

As we are evidently facing a period of reaction, it would be well if those who are struggling for Freedom would acquire three qualifications

a little knowledge of law,  
a good deal of self-control, and  
some common-sense

The first is necessary in order to know what may be done and what may not, for instance, people may not stand about in a street and block the traffic, a street is a thoroughfare, and it is the duty of the police to keep it clear, if people will not move when asked to do so, they have to be moved Secondly, people who cannot keep their tempers and who "cheek" the police are a danger to themselves and others, a good citizen should obey an order, and contest it later if the police officer has exceeded his duty, in a serious constitutional struggle we do not play into the hands of the autocracy by follies, this useful lesson I learned from Charles Bradlaugh, at once the bravest and the wisest popular leader I have known Thirdly, some common-sense is wanted, so as to stand firm in big things and yield in little ones

I must repeat here what I have repeated at intervals for twenty years, that students ought not to take part in political agitation College students are permitted to attend lectures, and they should especially attend courses of educative lectures on the questions of the day But they must not take part in political agitation, in which their want of experience and natural excitability make them—like untrained recruits in an army—dangerous to themselves and others They must learn to be orderly, to submit to the

useful restrictions imposed on all citizens, and to obey lawful authority. Otherwise, in the difficult times in which we live, they may do irretrievable harm to themselves, inflict the most serious injuries on the cause of constitutional freedom, and merely play into the hands of those who desire to find a justification for coercion and increased repression. Moreover political agitation means, to the young, violent excitement, and this weakens the student for his necessary work. Self-control and study for four years, so as to become worthy to serve the Mother, is not a very serious hardship. A youth who cannot face this will not grow into a strong man.

[When a number of Bengali boys appeared in mourning on account of the partition of Bengal, Dr Besant as President of the Central Hindu College forbade their demonstrating within the grounds, saying ]

If we are to allow every different part of India to send orders to our boys to take part in political demonstration, then one day we may get an order from Calcutta, another day from Madras, Bombay, or Lahore, bidding our students protest against or demonstrate for some party measure. All discipline would vanish and our institution would become a whirlpool of undigested politics instead of a sober educational training-ground for India's sons. We surround them with an atmosphere of love of country, of duty to their Motherland, we encourage discussion and debates, we foster initiative and self-dependence, but we avoid all sectarian controversies. If we did otherwise, we should get animosity and party feeling instead of harmony and steadiness of growth. Just because we love India truly we dare to oppose our brothers when they want to do that which is unwise.

say definitely and clearly that the duty of boys is to learn and not to make political protests. It is not their business to protest, but the business of men. Men rightly take part in the politics of their country. The boys have to learn, they must be educated, they must be disciplined. Studentship is the time of obedience. It is against the Hindu Shastras that a student should interfere in the affairs of his country. Moreover, it is not right that the boys' warm hearts should be used by elder people to foment public discontent and to harass Government.

## 7 COMBATING FREEDOM'S WORST ENEMY

Long training, and my intimacy with refugees in England from Continental revolts and revolutionary attempts, safe under the protection of Britain's Union Jack, gave me the experience based on unshakable foundations of principle and method, that I have sought to place at the feet of India since first I touched her shores. Why should anyone be surprised that I oppose conspiracy now as I opposed it in 1915?

I have kept an absolutely steady course since I took active part in political work here, having tried to prepare the way by religious revival, education, and cautious social reform. Since 1876, when I published my first booklet on India, I have had in this matter one aim only in view to help in winning Home Rule for India by constitutional means, and

have strongly denounced conspiracy whenever it raised its ugly head and brought youths to the scaffold

I said, at the very time that I was writing and publishing articles in *The Commonweal* that were used against me, when the Government forfeited my security, that "if conspirators played bombs, Government must play halters" . . . That phrase was not objected to then . . . as I was at the height of popularity . . . This was the exact equivalent of the words used in speaking of the crowd at Delhi, numbering thousands, who were trying to break into the station, guarded by a little force of some forty men, and who bore the shower of brickbats till all were wounded, and at the point of being overwhelmed, that in such cases, "Brickbats must be answered by bullets" I was very unpopular then, because I was opposing Mr. Gandhi's Non-Cooperation, so that the phrase was caught up and used against me all over India with great effect, disjoined from its context and the circumstances under which it was used . . I do not agree with those who think that a huge and aggressive mob is justified in using violence and trying to kill a handful of men guarding a railway station from destruction, but that the handful is not justified in using violence to repel the assault and to save their own lives.

—3 and 4 November 1925, *New India*

[This is] a view that I have held since 1874, when I began to work with Charles Bradlaugh, who abhorred rioting, as the worst danger of a popular movement which stood for liberty and the rights of the people Having held that view for close upon 50 years, i.e., during the whole of my public life, I see no reason to change it now All those who care

for freedom share it, though they may not think it expedient to say so in times of popular excitement, for mob violence is freedom's worst enemy, as we have seen when the N -C O movement was strong, and when it deprived all who opposed it of the elementary rights of free speech and free meetings. The tyranny of a Government is hateful, but the tyranny of a mob is far worse, and it is just in the moment of popular excitement, necessarily accompanying any movement for a Nation's Rights, that the lovers of freedom must speak out for the preservation of order, and restrain their followers from every act of violence. Even Mr Gandhi felt this, after the Delhi, Ahmedabad, and Viramgam rioting, and suspended his law-breaking movement, as he later suspended the Bardoli Civil Disobedience programme, because of the Chauri Chaura horror.

A Government exists to preserve the safety of the citizens, a violent mob, left to itself, loots, burns, destroys, and murders. At Viramgam, a mob assailed a single official in charge of a custom-house, poured petrol on his clothes and set them on fire. Delhi was under a reign of terror for some days from riotous mobs. Ahmedabad had offices and other houses burnt down, and several men killed. Was all this to be permitted to range unchecked?

When India has Swarâj, how are her Governments to deal with brickbat-throwing mobs? Are they to be allowed to kill and maim as they choose, to fire houses, to burn living men to death? If not, at what stage of brickbat-throwing may bullets make reply? One of my objections to Mass Disobedience and to plundering mobs, is that they are rearing huge obstacles in the way of the first Home Rule

Government. When the Paris mobs had either guillotined or driven away the French nobility, and had glutted themselves with blood, Napoleon thought that what was wanted was "a whiff of grapeshot" Safety of life, limb, and property is the duty to secure which Governments are made Without such safety, Society cannot exist During the time of N-C O power, volunteers molested people in the street who did not wear khaddar, and pulled off their ordinary head-dress Naturally such people do not like force to be used against them, though they use it freely against others

While I am in favour of boycotting the British Empire Exhibition, and of a discriminative boycott of British goods, till the Kenya injustice is redressed, I stand by my principle that mobs who attack the soldiers and the police when they are on duty should be met by force, and dispersed with as little violence as may be, but with as much as is necessary I prefer to guard the lives of peaceable citizens rather than those of rioting roughs, when the choice is forced by the latter, though I admit that the roughs would disapprove

—13 December 1923, *New India*

## THE BEST REMEDY

While speaking thus, and when I later fought Non-Cooperation because I saw it must lead to violence and bloodshed, I laboured on steadfastly for Home Rule I shall do the same now There is no cure for revolutionary movements except Freedom *But while we continue to work for Freedom, violent conspiracy, which uses bombs and revolvers, must be put down by the strong arm of the law* Repression is no remedy, but it must hold conspiracy

in check, while the real remedy is being applied I do not agree with Mr C R Das that fifteen years are needed to educate the people for Swarâj Only the exercise of Liberty will train them to efficient Self-Government, and I demand it as quickly as possible

—3 and 4 November 1925, *New India*

## A TEST OF STATESMANSHIP

Clearly, we are at the beginning of a campaign essentially revolutionary in its aim If there has been no manifestation of violence so far, it must be attributed to an element of good humour with which the Government has treated the long and spectacular march which preceded it But the first crop of arrests and imprisonments has produced the inevitable sequel in hartals As the tension increases, the Government will be compelled to resort to measures which will have serious reactions on the country and diminish the stock of the Round Table Conference It is Lord Irwin's singular good fortune that he still retains the confidence of large sections of the people in both countries But how far he will continue to enjoy a free hand, in the event of the movement assuming more serious proportions, is a point open to question

It is most undesirable, in any interests, that the movement for civil disobedience should be allowed to grow After all, the lesson of taking the law into one's own hands may be quickly learnt—but at a terrible price to the community Since there will be a Government in this country and, one hopes, a Swarâj administration in the next year or two, the legacy of a movement which challenges authority

wherever it exists is, to say the least, of doubtful utility. But that is of the most trifling consideration in the present circumstances. A revolution is the last thing India can afford, but it is a revolution that is being ushered today—non-violent it may be in the initial stages, and so long as the forces of violence are content to bide their time.

Gandhiji's movement cannot be killed with ridicule—that the Government has already realized. It should not be put down even with "a policy of minimum repression," as the British press is urging Lord Irwin to do, for the simple reason that the minimum will be a factor steadily on the increase. On its side, the Government cannot allow its authority and its laws to be flouted without the impression spreading that it is afraid to take action against certain persons. In the most difficult situation in which the Viceroy finds himself, only the highest statesmanship can prevent India from being plunged into a position which it may take years to retrieve.

—10 April 1930, *New India*

It must be admitted that, in spite of the lawless character of the movement, Mr Gandhi has been a very powerful influence against violence. Now that his activities have come to a stop, it is possible that the energies of those who believe in active violence may break out with redoubled vigour. If that happens, the effect of it will only be to heap discredit on the movement and extinguish it all the sooner. Assuming that the movement is in due course brought to an end, the practical question remains as to what steps the Government should take in order to give once again a constructive turn to the course of Indian

politics It is worse than futile to imagine that events that have happened as a result of the Congress resolution of December last may be treated as of no particular significance The extent of the Civil Disobedience movement is a measure of the deep distrust with which the actions of the British Government are viewed by the Indian people, and of the intensity of their discontent with the present system of Government Whatever the Government proposes to do, if it is to be of any use at all, must be of such a nature as to reinspire confidence in them and win them to support the new Constitution The best of Constitutions cannot last without the support and cooperation of those concerned in its working It is, therefore, the duty of the Government to consider at this juncture the best possible means of conciliating and pacifying the Nation

—8 May 1930, *New India*

## CIVILIAN COMMITTEES OF LAW & ORDER

Either a man really believes in Non-Cooperation, or he does not If he does, it seems to us, his duty is to educate the country in the matter of Non-Cooperation, to make sure that it will be non-violent, and ceaselessly to press it forward

It is impossible to conceive of any legitimate reason for professed leaders of political opinion in this country refraining from expressing their views in this matter. We are acquainted with the absurd suggestion that the business of a leader is to find out what the country is going to do before he commits himself, but even that extraordinary idea of leadership does not cover the case of a politician who

advocates Non-Cooperation where it is convenient for him to do so, and ignores the issue otherwise

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It is unfortunate that very many do not believe in the seriousness of the outbreaks, and consequently merely look on sullenly. I feel sure that if they realized the reality of the danger, they would rally round the Government, for though wrongful repression has deeply angered the educated classes, they would, if they believed that there was danger to the British connection, rally round the Government almost to a man. At least in all districts where there is no disturbance, Government might go out of its way to show trust and confidence in the people, and it might also, in such districts, shut its eyes a little to overharsh criticism of its actions. Where there is violence of a serious kind, Government must meet it sternly, the more reason to be wisely gentle, where there are no signs of rioting.

All over India, however, there should be quiet preparation for the possibility of disorder, so that at the first sign thereof it may be checked. I have therefore suggested the formation of Committees of Public Order, that might carry out some or all of the following suggestions.

- 1 To organize bands of young men ready to help in maintaining order, wherever and whenever necessary
- 2 To contradict alarming rumours and exaggerated statements, likely to cause panic
- 3 To spread the idea of the responsibility of each citizen for the preservation of the public peace
- 4 To hold classes for the reading and explanation of news, showing the dangers of lawlessness, as exemplified in

the conditions prevailing in Russia and Central Europe, in consequence of the Bolshevik propaganda

5 To advocate cooperation with the Government in the preserving of peace, the checking of panic, the avoidance of all friction between the different classes and creeds of the community, and the promotion of friendly feeling among them

6 To report promptly to the proper authority any case of harshness, oppression, or unnecessary roughness, on the part of soldiers, police, or subordinate officers, so as to prevent popular irritation and resentment, and to give to the people the sense of security arising from the presence of trusted citizens, ready to listen to complaints and to redress wrongs in an orderly way

It is probable, that the Committees may never be actually called upon to help in the preservation of order, but they can do much towards preventing friction and quieting the public mind. Moreover, their very existence will have a tranquilizing effect. It is better to prevent violence, than to put it down when it has actually occurred. Besides, the King's Government has a right to expect that all good citizens—however much they may object to its present form—will rally round it when its very existence is challenged, just as the educated classes sprang forward to defend it when the War broke out in 1914. That generous impulse, so spontaneous and so cordial, was chilled by rebuff, and the effect of that repulse has not yet passed away from the hearts then wounded. But strong and firm, below all passing angers and resentments, is the loyalty of the educated classes to the union with Great Britain. It is the greatest asset of the Empire, its surest support, and the worst crime

of the Anglo-Indian press and of the anti-Indian propaganda in Britain, is the flouting of the English-educated class, the doubts cast on their fidelity, the slurs recklessly flung at them. The desertion of the educated Indians would sound the knell of the British Empire.

—May 1919, *The Theosophist*

## IS THERE A WAY OUT?

Every one who objects to Non-Cooperation is asked, not unnaturally, "What do you propose to do?" If, as many of us believe, the path of Non-Cooperation leads straight to a precipice, there is reason enough for objecting to it, *per se*, in that falling over a precipice is fatal. I submit that Non-Cooperation, in aim and in method, is revolutionary, for it aims at overthrowing the Government, and its method is by the force of numbers, thus "bringing it to its knees." A Government ceases to exist *qua* Government, whether you seize its members, imprison or execute them, or deprive them of all power by paralyzing them, so that they cannot function. The object is the same—to compel the Government to submit by depriving it of the exercise of its powers. It will be admitted, I presume, that both *Jehad* and *Sinn Fein* are revolutionary. Non-Cooperation is said by Muslims to be "a form of *Jehad*." *Young India*, in an editorial note, said that the difference between *Sinn Fein* and Non-Cooperation was that the former used violence and the latter did not. It would therefore seem that, by the statements of its leaders, Non-Cooperation is essentially revolutionary.

I do not deny that a Nation is justified in overthrowing a Government, when its yoke becomes intolerable. All free

Nations admit this right, and all of them have, at some stage of their history, exercised it The question thus becomes "Is the British yoke so intolerable that it should be broken by revolution?" This is the bedrock of difference between the Neo-Nationalists, and the pre-1918 Congress-Nationalists, both aim at making India a Free Nation, but the second use reforms as their means, while the first in their acceptance of Non-Cooperation, use revolution Every one who seeks for India Self-Government as a Free Nation within the Empire, is a Nationalist in the real meaning of the word, and I have always denied the claim of the Extremists to monopolize it But practically the second consists of Moderates, Liberals, and National Home Rule Leaguers, while the first comprehends the "Congress Party," the Extremists, and apparently the All-India Home Rule Leaguers

Is the British yoke so intolerable as to justify revolution, whether by force of arms or by Non-Cooperation? I deny it The Local Government in the Panjab, with Sir Michael O'Dwyer at its head, was intolerable, and the atrocities under Martial Law were intolerable No words can be too strong in their denunciation, and the supineness of the Central Government in carrying out the directions of the Imperial Government is most blameworthy, the penalties imposed on General Dyer are inadequate, and the defence of him in the House of Lords adds one more to its many sins against Justice and Liberty But against these, we must put the rule over the rest of India during these troublous times Bombay may well be cited against the Panjab, Sir George Lloyd against Sir Michael O'Dwyer The wounds of Bengal have been largely healed by the Royal Amnesty,

and its use in the Panjab has given her back the political leaders of whom Sir Michael O'Dwyer had deprived her. A few years ago newspapers were destroyed for a tithe of the freedom which they now exercise unchallenged, and men were imprisoned for far less than is said unhindered on many a platform today. I do not think that most people recognize the immense change of spirit which has come over the administration, their minds are so full of the Panjab cruelties that they do not see the present enlarged area of liberty, and in their righteous indignation with the malefactors of 1919, they do not recognize the honest efforts of the Governments of 1920. The continuance of Panjab misrule and its spread over India would have justified revolution, the change in the Panjab and the large changes in India would make revolution a crime.

I say "would have justified revolution," but must add, "if possible and beneficial." As things are, revolution would mean anarchy, and would result in a new foreign ruler infinitely worse than the old. For India has no Army, no Navy. She cannot defend her own frontiers, and, reduced to anarchy, with no government and no discipline, she would fall an easy prey to any armed Nation. Britain has sinned against India in holding back substantial reforms for so long, in narrowing them too much even when given, and, above all, in not fulfilling the ruler's first duty of protection by the condign punishment of those who, in the words of the Secretary of State's despatch, treated those who had the right to look to them for protection as though they were enemies. These are great sins and they have—it is idle to blink the fact—estranged the Nation, and made many look

with half-approval on suggestions of ending the British connection. But Britain has also great virtues, and Co-operation with her will bring India more swiftly to fully responsible government than any other line of action.

Let us look facts in the face. India is weak, because divided, helpless, because unarmed. Non-Cooperation is a big gamble, with anarchy as one stake and utter futility as the other. It must fail, because counsels are opposed. What is the use of banging the table and saying that no honest Indian *must* enter the Councils, when candidates are strong to every constituency? It is futile to say without power or authority "You *must*," when candidates reply "We *won't*." Orators cannot prevent them from going to the polls, they can abuse them, but abuse has been so overdone that it now falls flat.

### *The Shortest Way to Home Rule*

What then is the way out? I fear there is only one sure way, for even resolutions, protests, meetings, will soon be overborne by the pressing interest of the elections. None the less, they should not be despised, for all we have gained so far has been the result of these now-condemned methods of constitutional agitation, and even now the Central Government is being pushed by it into action, inadequate though that action be. There is only one way, because others are barred. Revolution by violence is inexpedient and impossible. Revolution by non-violence, Non-Cooperation, leads either to anarchy or futility. What is left? Working to get our very best men into the Councils. Sending up from every Council a resolution demanding

justice on the offending officials of the Panjab and for compensation to their victims, with the annulment of all sentences and refund of all fines, a resolution demanding the repeal of all emergency legislation in connection with disturbances, including sedition and treason in speech the passing of a Bill abolishing the sex disqualification for the political franchise, so as to enlist the great force of Indian womanhood for the public benefit, the using of every power for improving the condition of the masses, by local self-government, education, improvements in agriculture, industries, and the like. The first resolution will be for the healing of the past, the second for the guarding of the future. The legislation will be for the uplift of the masses for the removal of the poverty which is strangling India to death.

To the impatient, this way may be less attractive than the direct struggle for immediate redress, but it is sure, it is within our power, it means the political education of the people, the winning of Liberty, the guarding of it when won. For Liberty is not safe under a statute, but under the spirit of the Nation. It may not win rapid redress of the Panjab atrocities, but it will make their repetition for ever impossible. It is the manly way of a virile Nation, conscious of its strength, but also conscious of its present limitations, and it is the shortest road to HOME RULE.

—*The Citizen*, April 1920, quoted in *Gandhian Non-Cooperation or Shall India Commit Suicide?* (1921)

## II. PURNA SWARAJ— WORLD ISOLATION

### *LOYAL TO TRUTH*

THE National Congress in its Madras Session passed a resolution that the goal of the Congress is Independence, and we are told that this is binding on every loyal Congressman. Moreover, we are also told that this is the "immediate goal"—a perfectly illegitimate addition to the resolution. Independence Leagues are being formed, and people join them light-heartedly, making no difference in their daily life to suit their new angle of vision. Lawyers, who have taken the oath of allegiance—without which they cannot practise in the King's Courts—break their oath, and yet go on practising as though an oath more or less were of no importance. Members of Legislative Councils, who have also taken the oath of allegiance, join an Independence League, and yet remain in the Councils. And so on and on.

I have never myself held any office, entry into which entails the taking of the oath of allegiance, but I feel that as I accept the protection of the law, I am bound to give allegiance to the Sovereign of the Realm. If this be disloyalty to the Congress, I regret it, but the fault lies with

the Congress resolution, not with me I do not feel bound by Congress resolutions when I do not agree with them The Congress is supposed to be a National, not a party, organization, and in the days when it was filled by delegates from all the political parties who accepted its creed, this freedom was recognized The officers of the Congress were chosen from the majority party, and the minority party accepted their authority for the year, but kept its liberty of opinion, and its right to organize on its own lines No self-respecting person can permit a majority to silence his opinions, and to control his expression of them within the limits imposed by morality and good manners.

The Congress, unfortunately, is no longer a National but is a party organization. Those who attend it are no longer delegates, but become members by paying annas four and being accepted by one of the small local oligarchies, not for their usefulness to the Nation but for their subservience to it The local Committee here over and over again announces a meeting in the morning, gives the names of speakers without their permission—I was lately announced to speak in favour of an Independence League!—and begins its meeting when enough people have drifted together to form one The arrangements are farcical, and drag the very name of the Congress in the mud A radical change in the present Constitution is necessary, a return to the conditions before the present one was made The old name is kept, but the old spirit is gone This was shown by the calling of the All-Parties Conference to form a Constitution, a work which should have been done by the Congress, and not by an outside body, really representing the Nation

Meanwhile, let us possess our souls in patience and work for better days Loyalty to the Nation and to long-held convictions at present supersedes loyalty to the Congress When the Congress was really National, it did not demand uniformity of opinion and the sacrifice of convictions , it was great I am frankly against Independence proclamations which are unreal and are not carried out in life If it be disloyalty to the Congress not to pretend to hold a policy I do not try to carry out, well I must be disloyal to the Congress and loyal to Truth

—25 October 1928, *New India*

## TO FREE MEN A FREE NATION

Liberty is a great celestial Goddess, strong, beneficent, and austere, and she can never descend upon a nation by the shouting of crowds, nor by arguments of unbridled passion, nor by the hatred of class against class Liberty will never descend upon earth in outer matters until she has first descended into the hearts of men, and until the higher spirit which is free has dominated the lower nature, the nature of passions and strong desires, and the will to hold for oneself and to trample upon others You can only have a free nation when you have free men to build it out of—free men and women both , but no man is free and no woman is free who is under the dominance of appetite, or vice, or drunkenness, or any form of evil which he is unable to control Self-control is the foundation on which alone freedom can be built Without that you have anarchy, not freedom , and every increase of the present anarchy is paid for by the price of happiness, which is given in exchange

But when Freedom comes, she will come down to a nation in which every man and every woman will have learned self-control and self-mastery, and then, and then only, out of such men who are free, out of such women who are free strong, righteous, ruling their own nature and training it to the noblest ends—of such only can you build up political freedom, which is the result of the freedom of the individual, and not the outcome of the warring passions of men

—1909, *The Changing World*

## FACE FACTS!

What about India? India can only become independent by a conspiracy—which would be betrayed—to enter into treaties with Asiatic Nations to support an armed insurrection. Is the “left wing” of the Congress prepared to enter into such a conspiracy? I think not, but if not, why pass resolutions for the immediate Independence of which they now talk? The Independence or the subjection of a Nation is not one of the minor questions in politics. It is very much the major. I stand for Dominion Status because it makes India independent within her own territory, gives her control of the Army and of her (potential) Navy. Then she can take Independence whenever she wishes to have it.

In the absence of this, the cry for “immediate Independence” and the public formation of Independence Leagues is the preparation for either a non-violent or a violent insurrection. The first has been tried by Gandhiji and has failed. Who is to lead the second? The gallant lads of Bengal have tried it, and India left them to be hanged. Independence

Leagues are perfectly safe, for they are not serious They are merely "bluff"

—13 November 1928, *New India*

Work actively for the preservation of the link between India and Britain The immense importance of this link must be evident to every person of intelligence and foresight It preserves peace between Asia and Europe, it stands as a barrier against the breaking out of war between the two continents, a war which would mean a conflict of coloured and white Humanity, probably accompanied by the destruction alike of Asiatic and European civilizations, to be followed by a new Dark Age period The folly of the verbal Declaration of the Independence of India—without a navy to defend her coasts, and without an army trained to obedience to only coloured officers! Boys, inevitably without experience and therefore without foresight, shout for Independence, and at the first opportunity show their fitness for Freedom by breaking up a meeting which does not echo their own crude ideas, forgetful that intolerance shews their incapacity to assimilate the first condition of Freedom—Free Thought and Free Speech for all It speaks ill for their parents and teachers that they have not taught them broadmindedness and courtesy

—March 1930, *The Theosophist*

Let us make no threats which we cannot carry out Do not let us talk of "leaving the Empire," without knowing how we propose to leave it, and what elements of leaving it are in our hands I desire intensely that Great Britain and India should remain united, for neither can perform her full mission to the world without the other A Commonwealth

of Free Nations, coloured and white, knit by love and mutual service, that is my Ideal, passionately loved and perseveringly worked for. But I do not deny India's right to leave the Empire, nor her moral justification for doing so, under the humiliations inflicted on her by the present Government of Britain. But has she the power to leave the Empire? It would be easy to stir up a few riots, to murder a few people, but what then? Then fleets, blockading the coasts, aeroplanes raining bombs on the towns, invasions of Northern India by Afghans, Pathans, and frontier tribes, murdering and looting, Japanese invading Southern India, in alliance with Britain, India, unarmed, helpless, with no powers of resistance, no unity of purpose, reduced to submission and enslaved. Unless we are prepared to face this, threats are unmanly, undignified, absurd. People who make threats should face facts.

India's Freedom is very near, if we will work, instead of bluffing. Along the path of the first Party,<sup>1</sup> Dominion Status will be reached in a few years, or even sooner. Then shall there be peace between coloured and white peoples, they shall cease to be rivals and shall become complementary, there shall be amity, mutual trust, mutual service. The world shall benefit by their comradeship, and advance through their strength, peace shall be ensured, and science and religion shall clasp hands. Is not this a goal worthy of both Nations? Shall not our decision be to walk along the Path which leads to it?

—1923, *A Retrospect and a Decision*

<sup>1</sup> Advanced Liberals and National Home Rule Leaguers.

I submit that India, independent and alone, will commence the old story of invasions and subjections, and must at once begin to prepare for these by increasing her huge military expenditure in preparation for the near withdrawal not only of British troops, but of the great protection of Britain's mighty name. As part of a great Commonwealth, the strength of the whole Commonwealth is her defence. As she rushed to the defence of Britain, overmatched in Europe, so would the Nations of the Commonwealth rush to hers, if she were attacked from outside. Britain's navy is still the largest in the world, and that navy will be a sister-guardian of her long coast-line, even after she has created a navy of her own. All the strength of the Commonwealth will be at the call of every Nation in it, and that knowledge is sufficient to protect. In mere numbers, China is the only country that matches the Commonwealth, and in organization, in effectiveness for self-defence, there is no comparison between the two.

Nor can we leave out of account, in thinking of an independent India, the fact that one-third of her area is occupied by Indian States, which, with the cessation of the British Overlordship, would become independent kingdoms, as of yore. Many of them have well-trained troops and full treasuries. In a Home-Ruled India, these States would be autonomous units, and it may be that the Council of Princes might form a part of the Parliament of India. But in an Independent India, a desire to remove their neighbour's landmarks would probably arise, and the New India might have to defend her freedom against the aggressiveness of the armed major States, while she was still incapable of armed defence.

If India were independent, the Muslim part of the population—for the ignorant masses would follow those who appealed to them in the name of their Prophet—would become an immediate peril to India's Freedom. Allying themselves with Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Persia, Iraq, Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt, and with such of the tribes of Central Asia who are Musalmans, they would rise to place India under the rule of Islam—those in (now) "British India" being helped by the Muslim Indian States—and would establish Musalman rule. In thinking of an Independent India, the menace of Muhammadan rule has to be considered.

### *India and Japan*

To break the British connection would mean not Freedom but only a change of masters, for Japan is armed cap a pie, her population is overcrowded and needs an outlet, India at present cannot defend herself alone, and Japan would seize the hour of her weakness. To declare Independence now would be madness, and Britain would not be foolish enough to protect, while Independent India was preparing for future self-defence. She would either clear out at once, and leave India to be overrun, or would try to hold her down by force, while encouraging dissensions among her people, to the ultimate ruin of both great countries.

—1922, *The Future of Indian Politics*

India and Britain together can preserve the Peace of the World, and lead it into a higher civilization. Separated, Britain will become a small Power, and India will be overrun by the Afghans, the Asian Central tribes, and finally by the

Russian Communists, aided in India itself by the party of violence among the Musalmans

—April 1932, *The Theosophist*

## SEPARATION MEANS DECAY

The one vital matter for India is to concentrate every energy on winning Swarâj—Full Dominion Status, equal in all respects with the other Dominions. To this she should consecrate herself, shaping her own Constitution, demanding its acceptance by the British Parliament, and never relaxing her efforts until they are crowned with success. It may be a long and stubborn fight, but victory is sure, if India be true to herself, and her victory is the necessary condition of the stability of her connection with Britain. She will never again be at rest, she would be false to her Past and to her Future if she ever were at rest, until she is Mistress in her own household, Ruler in her own land.

Mr. Baldwin spoke the other day of cooperation between all who regarded the union between Britain and India as indissoluble. Whether it be indissoluble or not depends more on Britain than on India. If Britain insists on India remaining a subject Nation as she is today, then that union will inevitably be dissolved, sooner or later. No foreign rule in any Nation can be permanent. A tie based on the principle of equality, woven out of the threads of love, of mutual service, of mutual helpfulness, such a tie would probably last for centuries. But a leash against which one of the pair is constantly struggling, which is felt as an insult to self-respect and human honour, which makes men and women inferior to foreigners in the country in which they

were born, which causes their Nationals to be denied citizenship in any other country, because they submit to its denial in their own—such a bond has in it no element of permanence. Therefore, we, whether English or Indian, who believe that these countries have been brought together for the good of the world, who believe that apart they will decay, while together they will renew their youth and mount up to heights hitherto undreamed of, we must, by all we hold sacred, by our belief in God and by our duty to Humanity, work unweariedly, hope unchangeably, till Hope has become Realization, and India and Britain clasp hands in loving friendship, and enter the New Era side by side.

—17 November, 1925, *New India*

## OUR MARTYR YOUTHS

[Speaking of a crusade organized and engineered by revolutionary elements in the West to destroy Britain, Dr Besant said ]

It is luring some youths to their own destruction by its specious pretences, for their sakes, above all other reasons, I would see the conspiracy crushed. Its leaders, safe in Moscow and in Berlin, will laugh at the ease with which they are exploiting the Indian longing for Freedom, ready to sacrifice everything for National Liberty. They keep out of the danger zone, as Krishnavarma did, when he played the same wicked game with young lives that would have been the ornaments of a Free country and the glory of their Motherland. The Bengali lads are of the material of which heroes and martyrs are made, eager, enthusiastic,

passionately eager to sacrifice themselves to a great ideal  
 Were it not that I know that those who exploit them are  
 more to be pitied than their victims, I could almost hate  
 their destroyers But knowers of the Good Law dare not  
 hate, the greater the guilt of the wrong-doer, the greater  
 also his need for compassion

—14 November 1925, *New India*

## *IN THE NAME OF LOVE*

If more evidence were needed of the fact that he [Mr. Gandhi] is becoming more and more the tool of the Powers of Darkness, it is provided by his new policy of breaking the connection between India and Great Britain, on which depend the future peace and liberty of the world The linking of Europe and Asia in mutual love and service, the blending of the Ideals of East and West, the spiritualizing of the world by India, the building of a mighty Indo-British Commonwealth of Free Nations, the model of the yet distant Federation of the World—all this is now at stake and will be decided by the issue of the present struggle Defeated in Europe, the Dark Forces are making here their last stand, and over against our great movement of Reform, leading peacefully to Home Rule by the cooperation of India and Great Britain, they have started this propaganda of Hate, of growing violence, which, if successful, will tear asunder East and West, Asia and Europe, India and Britain, and wither the fair hopes of peace, amity, and mutual helpfulness and service Hate can only destroy, it cannot construct, and as the old craftsmen had their Mark, which they placed on their work, so is Hate the Mark of the foes of humanity

The flood of destructive human passions is set free by Hate, and rushes on its devastating way. Let every member of The Theosophical Society in India set himself to the task of stemming this flood, in the Name of the Lord of Love

—November 1920, *The Adyar Bulletin*

Let me close on a note which cannot be sounded too often. Some Indians would say that I, as an Englishwoman, ought not to speak on Indian national education. But ill do they read the signs of the times who rashly strive to rend apart and to set in hostile camps the Asian and European branches of the great Aryan Race. The English have still much to teach the Indian, the Indian has also much to teach the English. From India will come the spiritualization of all religions, the profoundest ideas of Deity, the most philosophical conception of the solidarity of mankind, the deepest science of psychology, the saving of the world from the nightmare of industrialism, the lifting of human life to nobler dignity. From England will come the practical sciences that yoke the forces of Nature to the service of man, the energy and accuracy which turn commerce into an art, the imperial power of organization, and the genius for applying principles to practice. Let the twain unite for the world's redemption, rather than destroy each other to the world's undoing. For the hope of the future lies in the twinship of these Nations, and they who would tear them apart are the enemies of mankind.

—23 February 1908, *Education as the Basis of National Life*

### III. DISUNITY— THE MENACE OF DIVISION

#### THE UNIFIER

*"I have always felt that one of Mrs Besant's greatest powers is her capacity to enter in a peculiarly intimate and understanding relationship with all with whom she comes into touch. With each one of us she has a relationship exclusively to ourselves. It is, of course, her wonderful power of adaptability, the power which gives her knowledge how to guide each individual along his own pathway—helping him to climb his own ladder, and not urging him, as do the ignorant, to jump down from his own ladder to climb another."*

—George S Arundale, 25 June 1918, New India

In the past separateness was right. Separation is the mark of descent into matter, and unification is the mark of the ascent to Spirit. The world is on the upward trend, although thousands of souls may lag behind. The ideal now is for peace, cooperation, protection, brotherhood and helpfulness. The essence of sin now lies in separateness

—1899, Dharma

Can Islam unlearn the aggressive spirit and learn tolerance—the splendid tolerance of Akbar? That is the religious problem which faces India today, for only if she can establish

religious peace can India be politically strong Can The Theosophical Society in India become the peacemaker? There are two atrocious wars which threaten the world with devastation—the war between the white and coloured races, which the white policy of Britain and her Dominions and the United States are stimulating, and the religious war between Christianity and Islam

—October 1923, *The Theosophist*

## WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF ONE FATHER

My purpose is the drawing together of Musalmans and Hindus, for India can never become a nation until Hindus, Zoroastrians, Christians, and Musalmans understand each other Shall we not all put aside theological hatreds and feel as brothers? Shall not the Musalman cease to mutter "Giaour," and the Hindu cease to whisper "Mlechchha," and the Christian cease to say "Heathen"? Shall we not learn to respect each other's faith, and reverence each other's worship? There is no need for conversion from one religion to another, each is a Ray of the Sun of Truth We must all return to the home whence we came, and we may well live with our minds at peace in the land in which we must physically dwell side by side None need give up aught that is dear to him that has been handed down by generations of his ancestors, that is the centre round which cluster the sanctities of home Each should not only love his faith, but also live it, and realize that his neighbour's faith is as precious to his neighbour as his own is precious to himself Let us learn from our neighbours instead of quarrelling with them, love them instead of hating.

respect them instead of scorning It is written "All shall return to God" It is written "All shall perish save His Face" Call Him Allah, call Him Jehovah, call Him Ahura-mazda, call Him Ishvara—names are many, but He is One We see the Sun from different places, but He stands the same unchanging Light in Heaven, shining on all alike We are all children of one Father, why should we quarrel on the journey home ?

—1917, *The Birth of New India*

## HINDU AND MUSALMAN

In the writings of the great Doctors of Islam, the same splendid metaphysic is found which is the glory of the Vedanta, and here lies one of the reasons for union between Hindus and Musalmans in modern India Islam and Hinduism can meet each other, and clasp hands in brotherly friendship on this high ground of philosophy and metaphysic, common to both, Musalman Doctors and Hindu Acharyas standing side by side And here may I say a word of gentle reproach to my brothers of Islam ?—"This metaphysic is yours, but it is of value for the world, why do you not translate it for the benefit of India and of the West ?"

By the translation of these words, a point of union, then, would be found between Musalmans and Hindus, and they would find themselves at one in philosophy and metaphysic, while differing in rites And secondly, such translations would vindicate Islam in the eyes of the world, as translations of the Acharyas have vindicated Hinduism Europe will recognize and honour the Muhammadan learning of the

East, and we shall hear no more of the reproach that Islam favours ignorance

—1917, *The Birth of New India*

There is no difference for us between Hindu and Musalman  
Both are Indians, both come from the womb of the Mother

—16 November 1917, *New India*

Let the old antagonisms die Let your country be the greater for the religious differences Let the common welfare of the nation be the care of every religion Let each religious community train its own children in its own faith, and not try to get at the children of other religions and make them apostates in the home of their fathers and mothers Only thus can you have religious peace and religious respect Do not let your ship, of nationality be shipwrecked on the rocks of religious hatred and religious suspicion Learn mutual respect Learn that each has something to learn from the religions of the rest of mankind, from Buddhism learn that heart of love and infinite compassion which is the great characteristic of the Law of the Buddha, from Christianity learn that spirit of self-sacrifice which is the great mark of Jesus, the Christ, from Hinduism learn that note of Law, of Order, incorporate in that untranslatable word, Dharma, from Zoroastrianism learn that spotless purity of thought and word and action, which is the distinguishing mark of Zoroastrianism, from Islam learn that realization of the Unity of God, which is the insistent message of that faith Why quarrel? Each faith has its own characteristic Make all these characteristics part of your own nation Why should religious differences keep you from uniting for national ends? Let the

energy of the West wedded to the wisdom of the East  
help you in this great common task

—1901, "The Simpler Life" in *The Birth of New India*

## "FORGETTING THE THINGS THAT ARE BEHIND..."

In India, Theosophy alone can weld together Hindu and Musalman, Parsi and Christian, Jain and Sikh and Hebrew, and knit them all in bonds of loving friendship with their younger brethren of the West. Let us all seek by mutual love and mutual respect, to understand and sympathize with each other, never harbouring suspicions of evil motives in our minds, never allowing harsh or contemptuous phrases to escape our lips. In these days of crisis and of growth towards self-government in India, let every Theosophist be a centre of peace and goodwill, let the Englishman trust the Indian, the Indian trust the Englishman, "forgetting the things that are behind, let us reach forward to the things that are before," and work together for the happier age that is dawning, the age of equal citizenship, of the abolition of differences between races and colours, an abolition now existing only in The Theosophical Society, but which is to spread from it over the whole of India. Over the storms of the time, let the White Dove of the Wisdom hover, emblem of knowledge and of love

—1909, *Theosophical Presidential Address*

## HOW TO WIN LIBERTY

There are only two ways of a nation winning liberty by physical violence or by Reforms won by the strength of the

people and the use of all the powers that they have. Between these two ways, you have to choose today. It was openly said in the Congress—if it had only been said in the Subjects Committee, I should not repeat it—that we are at war with the Government. Think over that and see whether you are prepared to take up that position, whether you are ready to enter on such a titanic struggle, whether you have a reasonable chance of winning, before you plunge into it when it will be too late to draw back. Measure your strength, reckon up your resources, notice the divisions among your own people, and do not simply say “We must be united because India is not united at the present time.” If Brahmanas and Non-Brahmanas cannot live together in Madras in peace, how can you expect a united Nation? If these small differences between people of one religion cannot be got over, how are we to weld the Nation into an irresistible unity which no power would be able to withstand? It is no longer playing with politics and taking politics as employment for leisure hours. Politics is now beginning to be a wholetime work, claiming the cleverest brains of the country and the bravest hearts. For myself, I believe that India is able to win Home Rule, strong enough to do it, ready to do it, if it is only possible to hold this great movement in check, so that we could turn to ways of swift Reform instead of turning aside into the supposed non-violent inaction which would inevitably break into violence. If it is possible thus to win Home Rule, it will be by working strenuously along the lines of Co-operation.

—19 October 1920, *New India*

One of the valuable points is shown in the first of these joint addresses, that is, the four great political bodies unite in a single lot, inspired by a single hope and moved by a single will. In unity will lie the coming of our freedom, and on that unity the final victory depends. We do not want absolute identity of opinion on every detail, we want identity of object and variety of method, all animated by one desire, the liberty of the Motherland. Their methods may be—ought to be—different as they may appeal to different temperaments, and to different types of mind. Variety is part of perfection, provided the variety blends in a single movement, for then variety gives richness and colour, and in richness and colour lies the beauty of nature. Not identity of opinion then, but identity of aspiration not a single body but many bodies moving with a common purpose—that is the perfection of the national organization, and it implies independence of thought and vitality on which the character of a nation depends.

—16 April 1918, *New India*

## A YEAR OF TRUCE

Now, the particular work I want to begin at once here, which I had been already doing, is to try to win the heads of the various political Parties in India to join together and work together for that which we all desire—Dominion Home Rule for India. I had a long conversation, I may say to you, with Mr Gandhi yesterday morning, and we discussed the position and some of the methods by which there was a possibility of a general union being brought about. He was the only one of the big leaders whom I could see in

Bombay about this union. He will thoroughly cooperate in the endeavour to bring about unity right through India among those who take part in political work. As that is a great difficulty in our way, division among parties, if we can only bring about union, then our battle will be very, very largely won. But I begin by asking you, all of you individuals, not to say harsh or unkind things against people who may not agree with you in all your opinions, but who are in favour of Home Rule for India. We want to attain in India a year of truce between parties, of peace in which active work may be carried on by all, and there is not one among you who cannot do something to create that atmosphere of peace by being peace-makers in your own particular circles, remembering that India is greater than any party, that the Freedom of India matters more than the individual opinion of any of us. We ought to be ready to sacrifice prejudice, though not principles, in working for that supreme object of making India what she ought to be, a Free Nation, a work in which all of you are cooperating with myself, for there is one work for all of us, and you must try to bring about at least a year of peace during which that one object may be carried on in cooperation with all of us.

—1 September 1924, *New India*

## SERVING THE COMMON MOTHER

[From Dr Besant's Reply to Addresses on her Jubilee Celebrations]

In speaking of India in England, without thinking I spoke naturally of what we want, of what we demand, of what we are determined to have. I was rather struck when

newspapers complained and asked how as an English woman I spoke as though an Indian. What is one single body in the long procession of bodies that all of us have worn, and that which is wrought by many lives into the bodies that endure—that is the Motherland, and to me that is India. When one wants to serve, and as I found in England that our great difficulty was the multiplicity of parties over here, it seems to me that the obvious thing today is to try to get rid of the opposition and make the common union shine out, the common demand for India's place among the Nations, and not to quarrel over trivialities and refuse to walk together because the path may have here and there a rut. We are all going in the same direction, we are seeking the same goal, we are all pledged to the common Mother, and to make her Queen in her own household, and all her children to find a place therein.

You would hardly believe that the first paper that I read every day in England was the *Morning Post* and I learnt a lot from it. It gave the largest amount of news about India and I wanted to see how they put it. I found that they had a number of assassinations and all kinds of things so that you think of India as though seething with fury. But I sometimes reminded them that Indians, including amongst them Hindus and Musalmans, have been able to live in the country and prosper for a thousand years, and that it is not likely that they were going to very, very seriously disagree except as brothers disagreed and quarrelled, and that they make friends again. The whole thing is so exaggerated there, and they see India as if it were a constant mass of assassinations and rioting. And yet if you compare the two

populations, there are more murders and assassinations in England in comparison with its population, than there are in India with the hundreds of millions of our people. We want to win their understanding. We want to be very firm and steady, but not provocative in asserting our claim. We should every one of us remember that it is not worthy of our Motherland if in grave and serious questions on which the future not only of India but all other countries as well will depend, we cannot argue quietly, perseveringly, with self-control, and with gentle words. For who shall dare to touch the Chair where India sits with hands unclean, so that they may soil the radiance of her purity?

—4 September 1924, *New India*

## LET US WORK WITH YOU!

[*Regarding a campaign of hatred against the English  
Dr Besant said* ]

Surely it cannot be well to circulate fabrications of this kind. To what end can they bring us? And what purpose can they serve? It means, if successful, the stirring up of strife, the rending of India, the explosion of war. I ask you why the English should not work with their Indian brothers? Why page after page in an important Review—admirably conducted save for its wild hatred of the English—should be filled with incitement to strife? Why should every Englishman who has tried to serve India be insulted, forgetting that in the changes which have made modern India, English and Indian have worked hand in hand? Is there any reason for this suspicion and this hatred? There is a justification, and that we, who wear English bodies, should never forget under

any insult There was so much of evil and of wrong, so much of treacherous betrayal and barbarous treatment in the past, that Indians may well suspect and hate When I see suspicions rise, and read words of hatred I say to myself "Alas ! the memory of wrong still remains, and the only way to root it out is the way of loving service, of quiet acceptance of now wrongful suspicion, until hatred is worn out by love" "Hatred ceaseth not by hatred at any time, hatred ceaseth by love" And will not you, my Indian brothers, allow the few of us in English bodies, who have given to the Motherland our love, our work, and our devotion, who have for her sake forsaken the country of our birth and the friends we have left behind, will you not allow us to pour out our love at India's feet, and to give the service we count it honour and privilege to render ? Will you not let us make amends for the wrongs of the past ? We will bear the karma of our country , we will bear the suspicion , we will bear the hatred , and we will pay you back only in love and service Even if at the bottom of your hearts you do not trust us, even if you wrongly think that we have some ulterior motive, some personal aim, yet, for the sake of India's future, for the sake of the children of the future, who should work hand in hand and not in ever-perpetuated hatred and mutual wrong, forgive us what is wrong in the past of our countrymen, take us as willing offerings to make amends for the wrong Do not drive us away until you have others to replace us , but let us work in love and harmony, and let us help you towards that Self-Government, which can only come by English and Indians working hand in hand for the coming future and the Motherland, to make the

common tie which shall bind these countries into one for evermore

—December 1909, Theosophical Convention Address

If England and India will join hands and work together for the common good, if they will forget their mutual prejudices and hatreds, if they will cease to entertain the foolish suspicion which makes them mutually distrustful, if both will find means to solve the race and colour problems as we have solved it here in the Central Hindu College—and we have solved it, for here we know no race, no colour, only amount of service and usefulness—if the Empire will deign to see it can be done, as in us, the humblest and youngest of her children, then England and India together will rise to a future greater, grander, mightier than the past of any Empire that has wielded far-spread power. For they are the younger and elder brothers of the same Imperial Aryan family, and together they will be omnipotent, though the world should rise against them in arms

But if their union be broken, then both will have their day

—1911, Central Hindu College

## ONE UNITED PRAYER

[At the close of the Special Congress, 31 August 1918, Mrs Besant was received with shouts of "Bande Mataram" and applause]

### Be United!

I am called on not to speak on the details of a scheme that you all can read but to wind up a discussion which has placed before you the main points of that which we have

striven to accomplish In the battle into which we are now entering, after placing the essentials of our Congress-League scheme within the framework of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, I would like to remind you that we are like an army with a strenuous campaign before it, advancing against well-disciplined and serried hosts For the success of such an army unity is absolutely necessary Now, in every army, you have your artillery, your cavalry, and your infantry But their place is different and they must be co-ordinated if they are to succeed in the struggle If your cavalry charge ahead, brilliantly galloping on the foe without the preparation of the artillery, without the support of the infantry, what will happen? The enemy will meet them in a charge, will find them unsupported, will mow them down, separated from the main body of the hosts and then, having annihilated the cavalry, it would advance across the ground left to annihilate the infantry in its train If we are called impatient idealists, if we are cavalry, we cannot win the battle by ourselves We must have the infantry, that is, those who cannot gallop on horse but who have to walk with their particular work, and I say we must wait for the infantry, we must be ready to accommodate our pace to theirs, and when their main body has fought the battle, then we may charge as rapidly as we can and turn the victory into a complete routing of the enemy

I submit that the divisions made so much of, the controversies that stir the country, are nothing more than a manifestation of political life and political thought (Hear, hear) You had much more unity in the days gone by Why? Because the masses were not thinking, because the young

took no interest in politics, because a few voiced the aspirations of the Nation, and there was no difference because of the absence of thought. Now that you have much thought, now that you are forming your own opinion, now that you are preparing yourself for Self-Government, you must have differences, because you are alive. If you are asleep, if you are paralyzed, then you have a blank unity everywhere. But if you have diversity you should not quarrel with the manifestation of life. What we say is, those who do not go wholly with us, form your own organizations. In England, they have radical leagues, liberal leagues, conservative leagues, and so on. But they all meet in Parliament. Have your Moderate Association, have your Home Rule Leagues, have as many separate organizations as you want, but join in the Parliament of the Nation and let that united wisdom of the Nation guide the deliberations of us all.

I plead to you in uniting with your brethren of the Muslim League—in the whole of this proposition, there is only one slight matter on which they disagree with us—I ask you Hindus and Muslims of the Congress and men of the League to join in a common cry. One is the Motherland, one is the Nation, and can we not say, lifting our united voice?

“O Bharata Mata, Mighty, Divine, and Glorious. We are making your country fit for You to dwell in and we ask You to listen to our aspirations and to dwell practically in our midst.”

—3 September 1918, *New India*

## THE YOGA OF UNIFICATION

"Do good to those who hate you" Now, why should you? That is a question which is very often asked One day I was talking with a man who was not religious and when I quoted that precept to him, his retort was "Why should I? Why should I do good to a man who does harm to me? Shall I not encourage him to do it another time?" He was not willing to take it as a statement of the Great Teachers in the world He demanded a reason for obedience Now the reason is profoundly simple, although it is not so very often given Let me remind you that you are made up of Spirit and matter Suppose, then, you have a feeling of anger That feeling of anger in you will assert itself in the matter connected with you by violent vibrations Those vibrations in you tend to stir up in the body of any person with whom you meet similar vibrations, and so you have two sets of similar vibrations increasing each other as they strike against each other continually

How is that to be put an end to when two people meet, so that one angry person may not provoke another, and bring about a violent quarrel? By the second person setting up the opposite emotion, which will be accompanied by a series of vibrations exactly contrary to the vibrations of anger, and so will tend gradually to soothe them instead of intensifying them You can silence the vibrations of anger in another by sending against him a current of goodwill Now there is the simple scientific explanation of the moral precept The Great Teacher said "Return good for evil", but He was expressing in that a fundamental law in Nature that you can only stop evil by the opposite

good, and not by meeting it with a thing of its own nature a repetition of itself. . . It is the right way to meet any wrong emotion in another. In the case of the man I spoke of, the moment I told him that as a scientific fact he accepted it. It appealed to reason by showing him the natural facts underlying the moral law. And to know that that is a law to know that this influence we have upon each other is an influence we can use for good or evil that we can extinguish anger or intensify it and that on us lies the responsibility when we meet those who do not know how to rule their emotions, of supplying the emotion which will hinder the bad and strengthen the good; this is one of the valuable facts in the Science of Morality that every one should know first taking the statement and then experimenting with it and finding out that the law works as laws of Nature always work, invincibly and changelessly.

—1912 A Sketch of Theosophy

If you want to know with absolute certainty that thought makes character—try. And the way of trying is very simple, and proves the law to be true in a very short time. I say that because modern people are always in a hurry. But remember that no first-hand knowledge can be gained without patience and effort. Suppose you want to find out whether by thought you can add or take anything from your character—selfishness, or any other weakness: let us take as an example that you are irritable, this is not a crime but a very common and ordinary weakness. You recognize that you are very easily made irritable. Having recognized it never think of it again because, if thought builds character,

thinking about a weakness will put more life into it and make it grow, thought on your irritability would make you more irritable, and strengthen the undesirable characteristic. Instead of thinking about irritability you will think about the opposite quality—patience. Think about patience for some minutes every morning, not once, and then forgetting it for three or four days, and then doing it again. Irregularity undoes what you have done, and you will be only marking time. You must do it regularly, for this is a scientific experiment. Every morning, then, you will think for five minutes about patience. Think in any way you like, vary the thinking, for it does not matter much what you think, provided you think about it.

—1912, *The Law of Action and Reaction*

You meditate in different ways according to your ingenuity in planning them. One favourite way of mine—for I was very irritable in my younger days—was making myself an embodiment of patience, you never saw such a saint as I was in my meditation, whatever I might have been outside of it during the day, I was absolutely, completely, and perfectly patient in it! Then I brought up round me mentally all the most unpleasant and provoking people that I knew, and I heightened their power of provocation as much as I increased my own power of patience, and so I made a little mental drama, in which they provoked me in every possible way, and I answered as a modern Griselda. After a time, when I met the people, I found that their power of provocation had gone “Why did I think that person so annoying?” I would wonder. I found that, unconsciously and gradually,

I had established patience as a permanent part of my character Any one of you can do it

—1913, *Man's Life in This and Other Worlds*

Repeat that, with whatever variations you like, every morning for a week Then you will find that the thought of patience comes up in your mind without being summoned in the course of the day That is the first sign that your morning thought is working You have made in your mind the tendency to think patience At first it will come up after a little outburst of irritability, the morning thought asserts itself and you think "Oh! I ought to have been patient" Go on still, until with the provocation comes the thought of patience, and there is an effort to be patient Go on still, until the thought of patience comes before provocation, and the provocation glances off from the mental habit of patience Still go on, until you will find at the end of a few months (the time will depend on the force of your thought) that you have established patience as a part of your character, and you no longer feel the least irritability under the small provocations of life I know that this is true because I have done it I was naturally irritable, but am now a very patient person Try it for yourselves, and when you have proved the law you will have a feeling of certainty, you will know that it is true that thought makes character In that way we can go on, eliminating weakness after weakness, until each is replaced by the corresponding strength You can definitely build up character

And if you will try that simple experiment, and, remembering the importance of the question, be willing to sacrifice to it

five minutes a day for a few months, you will find that you have that power, then, as far as character is concerned, you have become the master who knows how to make it, and your success is only a matter of time and of resolute effort. Is not this enormously better than going on all your life sighing "Oh! I wish I were good!" and yet going on every day doing the same stupid wrong things? There is no other sure way. The power of thought is the power of creation. God made the worlds by His divine thought. We build our own little worlds by our human thought. There is no other creative power in the universe.

—1912, *The Law of Action and Reaction*

If you want to succeed, it means steady persistent thought along one line. A mason who is going to build a house does not put a brick here one day, another there another day, somewhere else the next day, and then in somebody else's garden the following day, and across the road some other day. Why, if he did that it would be a long time before he got his house built! That is what you are doing with your character. Today you are trying to be truthful, tomorrow patient, and the next day sympathetic, and so on, and you wonder why you never get any result at all, and you mean so well, too—you are trying to be "good." Give up the trying. Concentrate and practise in thought on one thing at a time, and thus build in the qualities, and then you will make progress, and the goodness will be inevitable as progress is made.

—1908, *Australian Lectures*

## DIVINE FORGIVENESS

[After Dr Besant's internment, when many of her friends felt bitterness on her behalf ]

I would ask you, if I may, that in this struggle the unkindness and the unfairness shall be left to our opponents, that we shall not answer evil with evil but we shall follow that example of Sri Ramachandra who forgot a thousand injuries in the evening but never forgot one act of love which had been laid at his feet in life. And so, let us worship the Mother, bring to her pure hearts and loving hands, let us ignore what is said of mischief, of unfairness, and let us remember that those who fight for liberty may not soil their weapons, because her enemies may fight with weapons that are not clean

We, for the moment, have won in the great struggle. Then the old Indian chivalry demands that we shall not strike a foe who has been struck down in the combat. Let us remember that we are Indians and therefore we must follow the Indian tradition. The old Rajput chivalry, which could fight gallantly while fight was necessary, could give a hand to raise a fallen enemy the very moment the strife was over

—September 1917, New India

## LET THE INDIAN NATION BE BORN!

The Indian Nation of the future must combine into one coherent and organized body, men of various faiths and men of various races, who in the past have been bitter enemies, and have striven against each other for many generations Hindus and Musalmans, Parsis and Christians—to say nothing of such well-marked inter-Hindu creeds as Jains and Sikhs—

have to be welded into a Nation, and this, not by mergence of all the varying beliefs into one, which is impossible, but by the Theosophical recognition of the spiritual unity of all religions, and the broadminded tolerance and mutual respect which grow out of this recognition. The warring races have to be welded into a Nation by turning the memories of strife into memories of common pride.

A Common Religion must ever be the strongest bond of union among the Hindus as a community, and in order to make Hinduism a strong bond and not a disintegrating force, we must lay stress on what is ancient and universal, and ignore what is modern and local. The *Sanatana Dharma Series* will aid Hinduism as a unifying force, for it contains all that Hindus universally accept and leaves out sectarian beliefs.

A Common Religion is not possible for India, but a recognition of a common basis for all religions, and the growth of a liberal, tolerant spirit in religious matters, are possible. Nor need religious differences in India check the building of an Indian nation, if men of all creeds will sink their religious hatreds, and recognize that the God they all worship is the God of Humanity and not a tribal or national Deity.

### *A National Language*

But while a common religion is impossible, a common language and a common literature are possible.

A Common Language is a bond of union, and Samskrit and English serve as common languages between Hindus of North and South, of East and West. The Hindus of the

North and South chant the Mantras in Samskrit, and discuss business and public questions in English. Therefore Samskrit should be taught in every English Department, and English in every Patashala.

Among the various vernaculars that are spoken in different parts of India there is one that stands out strongly from the rest, as that which is most widely known. It is Hindi. In addition to the boy's own vernacular, he should always learn Hindi, for that is the most widely spread vernacular of the country, and one can go from one end of the land to the other and talk in Hindi to all, save the most illiterate people in every part of it. In the North it is the vernacular of a great part of the people and a large additional part, who do not speak Hindi, speak languages so closely allied to it that Hindi is acquired without difficulty. Urdu is but Persianized Hindi. Panjabī and Gurumukhī are dialects of Hindi. Gujarati and Marathi are again dialects of Hindi. Bengali is softer and more poetical Hindi. It is true that when we travel South, we come to languages derived from a Dravidian source and not from Samskrit, and here a real difficulty arises. But the South of India cannot afford to be cut off from the North, and the knowledge of Samskrit in the South will make easy of acquirement its derivative Hindi, whereas Tamil and Telugu can never become universal in India. The learning of Hindi is a sacrifice that Southern India might well make to the unification of the Indian Nation. Then Samskrit will bind Hindus together in religion, English in Imperial and official concerns, and Hindi in social and family life. For the Muhammadan, Arabic will take the place of Samskrit, but English is as necessary to him as

to the Hindu, and Hindi is his Urdu, stripped of Persian derivatives and written in a different script

A Common Literature is another bond of union, and this all Hindus have in the Shruti, the Smriti, the Puranas, the Itihasas, the Philosophies, and their Commentaries, and the Drama. In literature the Muhammadan can as heartily enjoy Hindu masterpieces as the Hindu can delight in those born of Islam. Both belong to the Indian Nation, and form its common literature.

Geography has a determining influence on nationality, for two nations cannot co-exist on the same soil. A nation must have its national territory, and we cannot have a Hindu nation and a Musalman nation in India, we must have one Indian Nation from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Bengal to Kathiawar. Now such a Nation has never yet existed, and "India" always has been, and still is, a mere geographical expression. Old India was divided into many States large and small, and though occasionally in ancient days, an Emperor would be recognized and all the Kings become his Feudatories, such an Emperor ruled by force of his own great personality, and no one Empire endured and passed from Ruler to Ruler for generations. Hence India is yet to be made a living reality, an organized entity, and you, the students of today with tens of thousands of your like throughout the land, you are to be the builders of India, and from your hands she will emerge—a Nation.

How shall the Indian Nation be born? By Sentiment also. A feeling is beginning to pervade her races that India is the Motherland, and the Indian Nation is already a Dream, an Ideal. She exists already in the world of Ideas, she will pass, she

is passing, into the world of discussion ; and thence she will be born into the world of Facts. This is the Law. This is the Path. First the Idea, then the Popularization, then the Fact.

How shall we smooth the path for her coming feet ? We must make the history of India a common history, looking on all her great men as a common glory, on all her heroes as a common heritage. Hindus must learn to be proud of Akbar, Musalmans of Shivaji.

It may be said “ But if this is so, why not educate together the boys of different faiths, why have a Hindu College at Benares, a Muslim College at Aligarh ? ” Because, such separate education is the best for building a religious and moral character, and such characters, once moulded, will live together in peace and mutual respect in manhood. During the plastic years of boyhood it is best to mould and shape the character after its own type, to make the Musalman boy a good Musalman, the Hindu boy a good Hindu. When they are firm in their respective religions, they can mix together as men, and gain, not lose, by the contact. Only they must be taught a broad and liberal tolerance as well as an enlightened love for their own religion, so that each may remain Hindu or Musalman, but both be Indians.

Just as stones are shaped and fitted, and then built into their respective places in an edifice, so must these boys be shaped and fitted by their several religions to be built into the Indian Nation. Let us, then, hold up as an Ideal the Indian Motherland, the Indian Nation ; let us popularize the Idea, till the heart of each Province throbs in unison, then let her descend into the world of Facts, let the Indian Nation be born ! — *The Birth of New India* (1917)

## IV. THE GANGRENE OF LETHARGY AND APATHY

### **WHAT IS WANTED**

HOW long have I been urging upon you to take this matter of education into your own hands, and not leave it for others to guide and plan. What is wanted is not Government help. It is your work. What is wanted is self-devotion, energy, initiative, the willingness to go through years of drudgery, for only in that way can true education be built up. This has not yet been acted on. The idea, when spoken about anywhere, causes a good deal of cheering, but only in a few places has there been any real earnest work, even in starting an Indian school. Protests are necessary, but they should be followed by action, for thought that is not followed by action acts like a gangrene in the human mind. Better remain silent, better not even think, if you are not prepared to act, for in the higher spheres, as you know, thought produces action, down here, the thought, and especially talk, without action, does not get a nation very far along the line of progress. So all the energy flows out in the talk, and nothing is done. In the matter of education, why not begin to act?

—Lecture delivered 1910, *The Birth of New India*

Even a crime is less injurious to the soul than a continued brooding over it in the mind, the growing of a cancer at the heart of life. An action once done is dead, and the suffering that follows it teaches the needed lesson, but thought is generative and living.

—1899, Dharma

## TO INDIA'S LEADERS

We hear talk of apathy in India. But there is an apathy far more dangerous than that of the people generally, and it is the apathy of those who have been appointed to help and guide India. The apathy of those who know, and who have been entrusted with service which demands the most constant alertness, is infinitely more dangerous than the apathy of those who do not really know, even though many of them think they know. The apathy of those who know destroys. The apathy of the ignorant is but an obstacle in the way.

What answer can you expect to your call for unity, if there be absence of unity among yourselves—among you who know? Will you not try to remember that the more you lavish upon the common need, the greater is your claim upon the Higher Ones, and They well know how to be lavish towards those who know how to spend of their own substance in the service of others. The more intensely you strive for the Freedom of others, for the Freedom of the world, the sooner will you yourselves be numbered among the Free. You enter your own larger Self as you serve the larger Self. Is there apathy in you? Is there apathy in those movements which should lead the way in enthusiasm and

delighted absorption in the Great Cause they exist to serve ? What comes first with you ? Even if the smaller, the individual, must still dominate, shall it not dominate less, shall not the larger loom larger ?

Brotherhood among yourselves—true, unclouded Brotherhood, is the need, the imperative need, today And for this, each one of you is individually responsible You must establish and maintain Brotherhood in your own immediate surroundings, in every movement to which you belong You must do this, at whatever cost to yourselves Where you are, there must Brotherhood be Dissension, quarrel, dispute, misunderstanding—of these must you be rabidly intolerant You must be impatient of them, ruthless in crushing them It is of no importance that you may not succeed It is supremely important that you make ceaseless effort If you are never dismayed never despairing, never hopeless, never discouraged, success is yours Challenge yourselves as to your membership of any Association or Society which exists to promote Brotherhood Do you bring disruption or virility ? Be utterly frank and true Is there aught of disruption ? Have you not then a share of the responsibility for it ? Have you not contributed to it ? Have you fought it with all your power ? Have you been, above all, a harmonizing influence, a strong, unbreakable link in an otherwise crumbling chain ? Have you ever shown a spirit of sweet reasonableness and ever-willing accommodation ? Have you always given way, save in matters of vital principle, and even as regards these, have you maintained gently, respectfully, in a spirit of true comradeship ? Change if there be need for change Do not hesitate But maintain Brotherhood within

Brotherhood without depends upon Brotherhood within  
There would be little Brotherhood but for the Great Brother-  
hood India and the world shall not know Brotherhood  
save as there is Brotherhood in movements dedicated to  
Brotherhood Unbrotherliness in the heart means disruption  
in the body

—13 December 1928, New India

## AWAKE TO SERVICE!

Awake to the need for Service ; strengthen yourself for the helping of your fellows , and then your eyes shall be opened and you shall find the Master beside you So few people are really in earnest So few people, when they see a thing they want, have strength enough to will, so that they shall gain it You wish for it ? Yes, you wish for it now, and when you go out, you will wish for something else That kind of wish will take you nowhere You think of attaining a beautiful Ideal Yes, it is a beautiful Ideal, but an Ideal will not transform you into its own image unless it is assimilated and reproduced A strong will is what you want The flickering wishes that pass across the mind, the flickering thoughts that dance in the brain, these can never take any human being anywhere If you cannot live that life, if you do not become a little better than you were, it is because you have not learnt to think in the way that can create whatever you choose You 'have not learnt that And so you must strengthen your thought-power and your will-power And you must desire well For ripe thought and ripe desire—these are the two wings by which you may fly upwards, and reach the goal you see , and no book will

'help you, no words will inspire you, no thinker, no orator, can uplift you, unless you have in you the will of steel and the brain of creative thought Then only, by thought and by will, you may realize that to which you aspire

—1912, *The Ideals of Theosophy*

## SEIZE THE GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY!

If the present Constitution is "inherently weak and cannot last long" (quoting Dr Sapru)—being only meant for a transition period—there is every reason why those who favour constitutional progress should work for it, and prevent a revolution. If these things be so, why not expect an advance in the near future? There comes the weakness of the educated Indian, he lacks self-confidence, he does not trust himself. He has magnificent courage, but it is the courage of endurance more than of action, the courage of the martyr rather than that of the victor. Is it not that he forgets the cardinal doctrine, "God in us," or "God with us," according to the form of the creed? "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," said the Apostle of the Gentiles, one of a few who faced a hostile world, the result being in the cry of Julian "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" "Where Krishna and the son of Pandu are, there is Victory," cries the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Divine Power in the human instrument "I have you now," said the armed enemy, threatening the Holy Prophet as he sat alone unarmed "Nay, there is a third," said He tranquilly "Who?" cried the startled foe "God," quoth the Prophet, and the sword fell harmless to the ground. This was the faith of Cromwell, when he gathered his

Iron-sides, and in the event, executed a King, the faith of Washington, when his farmers faced the armed might of Britain and founded a Republic. This is the faith we need now in our Indian leaders, leaders in the noblest battle the world has seen, to restore India to freedom, to re-establish the greatness that lived through fifty centuries, and gave to the world unrivalled riches of spirituality, of intellect, of morality, and of physical wealth.

All the powers which make for righteousness are on India's side today in her battle for liberty, for freedom of self-expression, for the saving of the culture of Asia of which she is the highest exponent, for the lifting of the world to a higher civilization than that which is passing away. Unless she step forward now in advance, the death of the present civilization will mean anarchy, for only India can give the lead to the new. Gandhi has this faith and therefore this courage, and, alone, he made a huge movement, but unallied with wisdom it has only led him to the gaol and the movement to divisions and failure. The moment is now propitious and the forces of the Nation can be led to victory by men like Sapru, like Sastri, like Govindaraghavier, like C P Ramaswami Aiyar, like T Rangachariar, like Gokaran-nath Misra, like the Ministers of Bombay, U P and Bihar, reinforced by the younger men like Jamnadas Dwarkadas and those who work with him, like crowds of men and women outside the Legislatures, eager to be led, ready to follow. Will not all these, and many more I might name, seize the golden opportunity given thus by the Conference, and start from Delhi—where the Congress made, in 1918, the failure which has led to all our troubles—a movement

which, from the basis of the highest constitutionalism, will give India Dominion Status in the Commonwealth, Home Rule, Swarâj, within her own borders, that she may lead in building the New Civilization and permeate it with her ancient wisdom, her splendid culture? She has been the crucified among Nations, the despised and rejected of the Younger Nations, the scorned of the West. What shall her resurrection be but life to the world?

—20 January 1923, *New India*

Events hurry so swiftly forward that unless we can keep pace with them, they seem to flash past us, as a motor-car flashes by a bullock wagon. Yet, if we would take part in the building of the New Age, and strengthen the hands of the Hierarchy in Their mighty work, we must labour in co-operation with Them, however small may be our share in the execution of the Divine Plan, as labourers who fill their appointed places under the direction of Master Builders.

—March 1923, *The Theosophist*



## BE INDIAN !

The entire Indian Nation must be built up by the encouragement of national feeling, by maintaining the traditional dress, ways of living, and so on, by promoting Indian arts and manufactures, by giving preference to Indian products over foreign. Now this is a point which really goes to the very root of Indian revival. Do not undervalue the importance of sentiment, and do not try to do away with everything which differentiates India from other lands, rather strive to maintain the immemorial customs and follow the immemorial traditions, instead of trying to look as little Hindu as possible, as many of you are inclined to do. It is true, of course, that these are outside matters, but they have a very real effect on the generation and maintenance of national feeling. Take clothing and habits of life. There is no question that the Indian dress is the most suitable for the climate, it is healthy, it is beautiful, why then give it up? If Englishmen out here were wise they would adopt the Indian dress, instead of which we have Indians adopting the English dress at a possible risk to health. The Indian dress is suited to the Indian climate, not only because it is light, but also because its material can go through water daily, and so is far more suitable to a hot country than the cloth coat and trousers which are worn unwashed over and over again. The experience of thousands of years has shown the best kind of dress for India. But it is not only that. The inner feeling and outer expression often go together, and he who westernizes his outside attire is very likely to grow western *inside* as well, and therefore instead of strengthening he really tends to weaken his Motherland. Men should

lead a national, a simple, life with all the noble characteristics of the ancient times, their houses should have the old simplicity and not be crowded over with a multiplicity of things of foreign manufacture

We must press upon wealthy men that instead of sending to England to buy costly furniture, they should spend their money at home in encouraging the arts which are around them in their Motherland, so that a public opinion may be formed which would cry "shame" upon a Prince or Rajah who filled his palace with foreign articles, instead of having them produced in his own country, so that his wealth should add to the comfort and happiness of the people and strengthen the national prosperity. These would awaken a sense of nationality, filtering down from the higher to the lower, regenerating the nation, and striking its roots deep down into the physical lives of the people, uniting all India, binding all India together closer and closer and closer, till her oneness is realized, till Indians recognize in themselves a people

—1895, *The Means of India's Regeneration*

I hope, having come to make my home in this Holy Land, to try to show you, to whom I belong by faith and by duty, as time goes on, the lines of practical reform which are needed if our India is to be saved. I hope, in concert with some of your most religious and pious men to give that spiritual life for the lack of which we are failing, and for the lack of which the world itself is crying out. I know the old countries I have lived there. I know how they are suffering, and the causes that have led them to their present state. I know the misery, the poverty, and the

degradation I know the wretchedness and the struggle I went there to learn it, and I have learned lesson by lesson For what? I went there and was born there to learn—in order that by experience gathered by my brain that I am using now I might learn what civilization might teach I learnt that misery and struggle are in Western lands, that I might gather together the knowledge I could in a form available for use, and then come back to my own race and people, and give them a warning that, alas! they would not listen to, if it did not come through a tongue and from a brain trained in the midst of a civilization that it denounces and in the midst of the miseries that it knows For they cannot blind me with the glitter of their civilization, and they cannot dazzle my eyes with the glory of their outer appearance I have been underneath, to the slums and misery, I know its folly, I have lived in it I know its wealth I know its luxury, and everything for which you are yearning and which is dazzling the younger amongst you today I come back to you and say that this thing is a sham and that it is a delusion, it means degradation and not rising, it means spiritual death and not life I ask you to take me as your helper, for the life which came from India is given back to India for service, and I sacrifice it to the helping of our race

—1895, *Eastern Castes and Western Classes*

Now I have two or three words to say to you which I know some may think perhaps going too far I find it continually said that you must preserve the British character of your administration I ask you why? You are

not Britons You are Indians If you are Indians, your administration should be an Indian administration Why so much care about the British character of it, when in your difference with England lies your real value to the Commonwealth Like the phrase "blessings of British Rule," the words "British character" hypnotize the people There is a method of making people helpless while they are really free I could take some of you and by a few passes of my hand I could make you think that you could not move your arm or leg And because you thought it so, you would become incapable of moving That is what is done to you by your education You are hypnotized into the belief of your unfitness, into the belief that you must be guided by another Nation instead of being the Nation that you are from your immemorial past Therefore, I say to you, think what do you want and not so much about the British character of this, that, or the other service Claim your rights as men and the freedom of your own country What is it that you want today for India? Surely you want to make it fit for men and women to live in it? It is not so fit today It is not human to be in the condition that you are I ask you to remember your dignity, your self-respect, your determination to be free In this scheme, you are opening a door to liberty through which you will walk in the few years that lie in front It is not enough to have food, though you have little of it It is not enough to have clothing and shelter Without freedom, you are not men Without liberty, you are unworthy of your country I ask you to prepare this beginning of a new life of a new era for India and to pitch your hopes high and to pitch your

aspirations high For, it was said that if you aim at a star, then your arrow will travel far

—3 September 1918, *New India*

As your thought spreads in Europe and the sublimity of the ancient teaching becomes more and more known, as in the centres of western intelligence and western learning the names of the Rishis of antiquity become household words, and men repeat their sayings as crystallizing the noblest human thought, as this is happening, the eyes of the West are turning more and more to the India of today, and they are asking, "What will be given us by those men who boast themselves the descendants of the Rishis? Shall we find in India a nobler religion? Shall we find in India a loftier spirituality? Shall we find in India a purer ethic and a greater morality? Is modern India worthy of ancient India and are the men in whose physical veins runs the blood of the Rishis fit representatives of those mighty Beings? Do they show the Rishis' thought, the Rishis' devotion, the Rishis' spirituality, the Rishis' superiority to the transient joys of the earth?" What answer does modern India give to the question that is now coming from the West with ever-increasing force? What answer in life, in literature, in religion, is to be sent back to the questioners in western lands? Are they, when they come here with their minds full of noble ideas learnt out of ancient books, are they to be greeted with a copy of their own civilization and a secondhand repetition of the words, of the thoughts, and of the manners, with which they have been wearied in the West? If so, they will return disillusioned

from this ancient country and declare that, while it may be great to be the physical descendants of the Rishis, it would be greater to be the sons of Their mind, of Their thought, of Their life, Their devotion, and Their spirituality, and set the old example to the world instead of merely copying the phases of modern civilization

—February 1900, *The Theosophist*

In the matter of education, why not begin to act? You know you send your boys still by thousands and thousands to missionary schools, and it is a disgrace—not to the missionaries, for they are doing work which they honestly think to be to the glory of God and for the good of all men, they believe that their religion is much better than yours, and I am bound to say that they love it better, because they work for it much harder, as a rule. You ought to remember that your religion is the oldest of all living religions and the most perfect in its range and in its details. Surely, it is not for you to take the children, whose bodies you have given, and robbing them of their birthright, put them into other hands and mould them in an anti-Indian fashion. The missionaries do not make many Christians. But I tell you what they do. They dig up the roots of devotion and religion in the plastic soil of the boy's heart. They wither them with ridicule, they trample them down with sarcasm, and when the boy grows up, he grows up an unbeliever in all religions, a bad Hindu, and not a Christian—a kind of hybrid, who is of no use to his country. When you de-spiritualize an Indian, you de-nationalize him. Why does that go on? Because you do not care.

What is the essence of a National movement? Not blind antagonism to the foreigner—that is only the excess of reaction—but the determination to make your own national characteristics the leading features of your civilization, and only to accept from the foreign civilization that which can enrich your own without injuring it. The English do not de-nationalize themselves. They take what is good and valuable from every nation with whom they come into close contact, but they remain English still. And so should you do.

Take from other nations whatever of value they have to give you, learn their science, for that is their special contribution just now to the thought of the world, profit by their discoveries, utilize what they really have of value in their scientific thought. But let your coinage, as it were, your mental coinage, bear the imprint of your own Nation and not the imprint of the foreigner. Let it enrich, do not let it debase your coinage. Give it your own spirit and your own colour. Enrich your civilization as much as you will by infusing into it the gold, only the real gold, from foreign countries, but let it remain eastern still. Do not debase, but only enrich, do not de-nationalize, only increase the circle of your national thought. Then the contact will be useful and not death-bringing, then you will be better for the teaching of it, and not the worse, not corrupted but the purer for the contact.

—1901, "The Simpler Life," *The Birth of New India*

## WHICH SHALL INDIA CHOOSE?

It is the ideal that makes the politics and not the politics the ideal. There are two great ideals one over against the other, either of which a Nation may choose. One of these is material wealth and increase of physical wants, and the gratification of those wants ever more and more, and the other is the knowledge of the intellect, is the wealth of wisdom, is the growth of art, is the cultivation of beauty, is the realizing of man's higher nature. Art, science and intellect become the handmaids of the Spirit, so that the ideal is spiritual and not material, enduring and not transitory.

Which shall India choose? There is the point to which the whole of my thought has been directed. On the one side material advancement, on the other side spiritual growth, India between them, looking longingly towards the material wealth and the material luxury, but held back by an instinct that comes from the Spirit within her, that that is not the road to perfection, that that is not worthy of India's choice. If you choose the material ideal you choose strife, struggle, poverty, dissatisfaction, unrest and final death, whereas if you choose the spiritual you choose a peace that is ever growing, power that is ever increasing, strength that knows no diminution, and immortality of life. Which do you choose?

I, who love India as my own, for she is mine, India with whom all my hopes of the future and my memories of the past are bound up, this India that is so great and yet so little, so mighty and yet so poor,—I claim from the children that come from the womb of India that there shall be some worthy of the past, that there shall be some worthy of their Mother, that there shall be some who shall give her what she

asks thought, philosophy, literature, science, the great things that she loves, and not merely the struggles of parties and the questions that divide politicians. Some of the better brains should do this work, some of the abler tongues should preach it. I have told you the place for the politician, but some place is needed for the teacher and some for the thinker. I plead to the young among you, who have not yet chosen their path in life, whose hearts are still soft, and whose hopes are still pure. Turn aside from the struggles of the bar, turn aside from the examinations of the colleges, turn aside from the hopes of civil service, and the employment that is paid for with gold, give yourselves to the Motherland, give yourselves to her help, give yourselves to her redemption. Will you not give to the future what the past has given to you? Will you not hand on to the generations to come some addition to the treasures that the generations of the past have bequeathed to you?

There are so many Nations that are political, so many Nations that are wealthy, so many Nations that in the western sense are great. There is only one Nation the world knows that may still choose the Spirit instead of the body, and spiritual knowledge rather than material gain—only one Nation amongst all the Nations of the world, only one people amongst all the peoples of the globe. That Nation is India, that people the Indian people, and if you, the last hope of the spiritual life of man, if you give everything to matter, then in your apostasy the world is betrayed, and in your spiritual death humanity shall find its grave.

—1895, *The Place of Politics in the Life of a Nation*

## A CALL TO BROTHERHOOD

"Mrs Besant will live in the future as a great teacher of great truths I shall remember her most as a brilliant orator rousing me and thousands more to go out and work for the social salvation of mankind I shall remember her toiling long, laborious days that hungry, starving children should be fed, that unhealthy children might be made whole .

"And now today when, at the call of liberty and freedom, she has ranged herself alongside the people of India in their struggle for freedom, and when, as a sign of confidence in her and trust in her ability and capacity to lead them, the people of India have elected her as President of the forthcoming National Congress, she is only doing as she has done all through her life, standing by those who need a friend, giving her experience, her energy, her wonderful power of tongue and pen to those who are crushed in the struggle of life

"It is good to remember the long roll of women, young and old, rich and poor, with whom I have been associated in the work of organizing and rousing the workers and people of all classes One of the best and bravest is the woman of whom I have tried to write, who, at seventy years of age, has once again set out on a great adventure—the greatest, perhaps of all her life—calling to each one of us to join her in the great work of spreading abroad the principles of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and bringing together in one great Brotherhood all the Nations of the earth'

—3 December 1917, George Lansbury, New India

# V. *The Building of New India*

THE MASTER-BUILDER SHOWS US HOW  
TO BUILD

The prophecy of the dreamers that India shall be a mighty Nation is proving true today. That is the India that is coming, that is the India that is building, and you are the builders

—Lecture delivered 17 April 1914, *Birth of New India*

# FROM MOUNTAIN PEAKS— A VISION

## PRINCIPLES OF WORLD-RECONSTRUCTION

*The Foundation of a Stable Society*  
must be BROTHERHOOD

*The Need of Every Human Being*  
is for HAPPINESS and for conditions favourable  
to his Evolution

*The Duty of Society*  
is to supply an environment which yields these

The birth of a human being into an organized Society gives to him a claim, and to Society a duty—the claim of a child on its parents, the duty of the parents to the child. It is this natural and proper claim of the younger on the elder that has been perverted into the aggressive doctrine of “rights”, animals, children, the sick, the ignorant, the helpless, all these have rights—the right to be kindly used, protected, nursed, taught, shielded, the strong, the grown-up, have only duties

## *The Purpose of Organized Society*

Is the happiness and the welfare of its members, and where it fails to secure these it stands ipso facto condemned. Government exists only for the good of the governed." So said Pythagoras and the phrase has echoed down the centuries, and has become the watchword of those who are seeking the betterment of social conditions.

## *The Theosophical Ideal of the State*

As spoken out by Pythagoras

The Father-Mother of its citizens,

The Protector of all

'The duty of the State, of organized Society, is to secure to every one of its members at least the minimum of welfare—of food, clothing, shelter, education, leisure—which will enable each to develop to the full the faculties which he brought with him into the world.'

There is no necessity of overwork and absence of leisure, of lack of comfort and the means of enjoyment. Human brains are quite clever enough to plan out a social system in which every citizen should have enough for happy life.

*The Only Obstacles are selfishness and want of will*

*It Was Done Long Ago* under the King-Initiates who ruled in the City of the Golden Gate and in Peru. It was done in the time of King Rāmachandra, as may be read in the Rāmāyaṇa. It was done when the Maru ruled in the City of the Bridge.

*The Builders*. But it must be planned out by wisdom, not by ignorance, and brought about by the love and sacrifice of the higher, and not by the uprising of the lower. Mobs can make revolutions, but they cannot build a State

—1912, *Theosophy*

### *Principles of Nation-Building*

1 No past condition of a nation can be reproduced, for a nation cannot re-tread the path along which it has evolved. Principles can be re-established, but the application of them must be adapted to the new environment

2 A national ideal to be useful must be in harmony with the national character, and must grow out of the national past. It must be a native of the soil, not an exotic

3 Every nation has its own line of evolution, and any attempt to make it follow the line of evolution of another nation would be disastrous, could it be successful, but—as a matter of fact—any such attempt is foredoomed to failure, because it clashes with the World-Plan. The world exists for the evolution of the Soul, and for this evolution varieties of experience are necessary. Races, sub-races, families, nations, like the two sexes, subserve evolution by their differences, and offer the variety of soil and culture which brings out the varied capacities of the Soul. If they were reduced to a dull uniformity, their value as classes in the school wherein the Soul is educated would be lost, and the Soul would have one quality overdeveloped and another undeveloped

—1901, *Theosophical Review*

## Principles of the New Order<sup>1</sup>

Basing itself on the study of the past, Theosophy can lay down certain articles to be worked out into details by the highly educated and experienced. The articles are:

1. That Government should be in the hands of the Elders, i.e. the wisest, the most experienced and the morally best.
2. That the possession of ability and of power imposes the duty of service.
3. That freedom brings happiness only to the educated and self-controlled and that no one, so long as he is ignorant and un-self-controlled, should have any share in the governing of others, and should only have such freedom as is consistent with the welfare of the community.
4. That the life of such a one should be rendered as happy, and useful as possible under discipline until he is fit to "rule one, so that his evolution may be quickened".
5. That cooperation mutual aid should be substituted for competition mutual struggle.
6. That the fewer resources a man has within himself, the more means of outer enjoyment should be placed within his reach by Society.

The suggestions which follow are the results of my own study of what has been done in the past, and of my own thought on present conditions. They are only suggestions and many Theosophists might disagree with them. My own wish is to indicate a line of change consonant with Theosophical ideas. Brotherhood imperatively demands

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Besant's own heading.

fundamental social changes, and the rapid growth of unrest, justified by the conditions of the classes that live by manual labour, will force a change ere long. The only question is whether the change shall be brought about by open-eyed wisdom or by blind suffering. At present, Society is engaged in trying the latter plan.

The Land of a Country should be used to support

(1) The Ruler, his Councillors, Officials of every grade, the administration of Justice, the maintenance of internal Order and of National Defence,

(2) Religion, Education, Amusement, Pensions, and the care of the Sick,

(3) All who are not included under (1) and (2), and who gain their livelihood by manual labour in production and distribution.

### *The Years of Man's Life*

Education, free and universal, should be the only work of the period between seven and twenty-one years of age, so that the youths of both sexes should, on reaching manhood and womanhood, be ready to become dutiful and useful citizens, with their faculties well developed, so that they would be capable of leading an honourable, self-supporting and self-respecting life.

The working life—and all should work in one of the three above-named divisions—should last from twenty-one to fifty years of age, unless a shorter term should be found sufficient for the support of the nation. During the remainder of the life, the citizen should be in receipt of a pension, the result of the accumulated surplus of his working years, and

therefore a repayment, not a gift, he should be free to devote himself to any pursuit he pleased

Production and Distribution should be organized by such men as make the huge fortunes, now becoming so numerous, and after full provision for all concerned in the producing and distributing, the surplus profits should go to (1) and (2), chiefly to the latter

The Organization of Industry should be governed by the idea that labour should be rendered as little burdensome as possible by healthy conditions and by the substitution of machinery for human beings in all unpleasant and dangerous work—mining, drainage, and the like, where unpleasant forms of human labour are necessary for the welfare of the community, the hours of labour should be shortened in proportion to the disagreeableness of the task, without any diminution of pay

*The Life of a Scavenger* If the scavenger, for instance, is to lead a human life, as much of his work as can be done by machinery should be thus performed, for the rest his hours should be very short, his pay good—since the health of the community depends on him—and recreation, some refining and educative, some purely amusing, should be readily available within his reach He is an active hand of Nature, helping her in her constant task of transforming the foul and the dangerous into the nourishment of new life and new beauty He should be regarded . not as a drudge but as a co-worker with God Is it said that he is coarse, repellent? So much the more shame for us, the refined and attractive, who profit by his work, and have made him what he is by our selfishness, our indifference, and our neglect

*Education*: The value of Reincarnation as an explanation of life is untold. It cheers with the proclamation of final success, and ensures the permanence of every fragment, every seed, of good in us, and time enough for the least evolved to flower into perfection.

*As Applied to the Child* We see in the child an ego who has come into our care during the time of the growth of his body, to be helped in training it for the purpose for which he has returned to the earth. We seek to draw out of the ego that which he knows, that he may stimulate the germinal mental faculties and so impress the plastic brain. We do not regard the child-body as belonging to us, parents or teachers, but as belonging to the ego, and we see it to be our duty to help him in gaining full possession of it, to work from outside while he works from within, and to follow out any indication given by him as to the best line of study, the easiest road of progress. We give to the child the greatest liberty compatible with his physical, moral, and mental safety, and in everything try to understand and to help, not to coerce.

We must first give a good general education so that all may be able to associate pleasantly in Society by virtue of a common knowledge and a common training, then that specialized education that will fit each for the work he can best do for the State. The Nation must be organized with vocations suited to the people. Until the time again comes when the Devas will cooperate with men by guiding, as they do not do now, the incoming souls to appropriate bodies, we can only know a man's true dharma by the study of the child.

*As Applied to the Undeveloped Soul*

The congenital criminal is a savage, come to us as to a school, and it is our business to treat him as the intellectual and moral baby which he is, and to restrain the wild beast in him from doing harm

*The Immediate Treatment of the Criminal*, as he is—we hope, later, to eliminate the type

*Recognition, Segregation, Reclamation* These people, and the almost criminal class above them, are recognizable from birth, and they should be segregated in small special schools, given such elementary education as they can assimilate, be treated kindly and firmly, have many games, and be taught a rough form of manual labour

The teachers in these schools should be volunteers from the higher social classes, willing to teach and play with the boys, and capable of arousing in them a feeling of admiration, attachment, and loyalty, which would evoke obedience. They must be with those who are obviously their superiors if this is to be done

*Happy Labour* From these schools they should be drafted into small colonies, bright, pleasant villages, with shops, playground, music-hall and restaurant, ruled by men of the same type as before, they should have everything to make life pleasant, except freedom to make it mischievous, and miserable, these colonies would supply gangs of labourers for all the rougher kinds of work. To do right would be made pleasant, while to be rowdy and idle would be made unpleasant, "he that will not work neither shall he eat" is a sound maxim, for food is made by work, and he who, being able, refuses to make it has no claim to it. Checks

might be given for each hour's work, exchangeable at the shops and restaurants for the necessaries of life, and the man could do as much or as little as he liked, the equivalent in necessaries and luxuries would be at his own choice

### *Beauty Everywhere*

*From Slums to Gardens* In the light of Theosophy, it is the duty of the elders to plan out, and gradually to construct, towns of decent dwellings with sufficient interspaces, to which should be transplanted the dwellers in the slums, these poison-spots must be pulled down, and the soil, sodden with the filth of generations, should be turned into gardens, the filth will then be changed into trees and flowers, whereas to build new houses on such soil is to invite disease

*The Crying Need* More Beauty must be sought, for it is a necessity of life for all, not a luxury for the few. Beauty refines and cultivates, and reproduces itself in the forms and manners of those who live under its influences. Beauty in dress, in the home, in the town, is a crying need as an evolutionary force. When people were more surrounded by natural beauty than they are now, the clothes of the people of every class were beautiful, as they still are in the East, it is natural to man to seek to express himself in Beauty, it is only as he becomes far removed from Nature, that he accepts with indifference ugliness in clothes and surroundings

## THE KEY IS IN INDIA

In the Root-Stock exist the germs of all the various qualities of Fifth-Race mankind which become embodied and balanced in our Root-Race. These had to be developed one after another, and so the sub-races were dominated by one of these chiefly, and had to develop along those lines and assimilate them together. That is one part of India's great mission towards humanity in the world. The germs of all these sub-races are in her, as the child is in the womb of the mother, and the sub-race comes forth, develops a special quality or capacity through the new sub-race and then reacts upon the Mother. And so her children, spread over the whole western world, are developing their qualities, especially the quality that dominates each. The fourth sub-race is there with its mission of beauty, and the fifth is there with its science of mind, and both can find their key in India from whom they spring, and to whom many of them come back in order to help in the building up of the type of the whole Fifth Race. I cannot go far into that. The whole subject is of profound interest, but if we realize that evolution in the sub-races is for the enriching of the typical Fifth-Race Man, then we shall understand a little more of the way in which migrations go out and some of each come back to the Motherland, and how India is the common Motherland of the whole Aryan, or Fifth, Race.

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## THE WORK BEFORE US

The Sixth Sub-race will mostly be western. The work here is to build up the great Empire of the Fifth Sub-race by linking together, as I have very often told you in the past, England and India. The two together have been chosen to build a great World-Empire. While that is being built, the younger civilization will grow up under its protection, and the transition to that civilization is the work that the members of The Theosophical Society should take active part in at the present time. We have to prepare for the future along certain lines of definite work.

The first of these is Education. You must begin by building up the citizens of the civilization, and the citizens are, of course, in the children of today. Education must be founded on Brotherhood, Reincarnation, and Karma, and therefore on the study of the child, finding out what he has brought with him from past experiences as capacity. Do not try to force him into certain definite moulds or grooves, as children are forced today, whether they suit them or not. Find out what suits the child, and do not give him what suits the teacher. Theosophy lays down the lines of right education. The principles are universal, and the application is national. Do not mistake me. I do not mean that every one of you must be a teacher, but I mean that every one of you can find no nobler service for the Mother-land than helping education. You must help those who can teach, if you cannot teach yourself.

There are other lines of work and there is one which is very very badly needed here in India. It is the treatment of the so-called criminal classes. The prison system wants

absolute reform. The criminals have to be trained, not to be brutalized. The criminals are our brothers. They are younger. Try to lift them up to your own level. True, they have broken their duty to Society, but out of ignorance. The duty of a Theosophist is the duty of an elder brother to the younger. Our criminal system is more brutal than any system which exists in any other civilized country. If you exerted yourselves you could reform the system. There is no good in blaming the Government, when you are such a large population, and the rulers a few people. You can impose your will if you care for your brothers in prison, as much as you cared about your brothers in Ootacamund and Coimbatore. You brought us out<sup>1</sup>.

We have to deal with the great problems of capital and labour. In the new civilization, cooperation is to take the place of competition. Many of you may go to the villages and explain to the people the benefits of cooperation. Much has been done, but little compared with what remains to be done.

You can choose, each one for yourself, to work in this great world-vineyard, or you can remain idle. Remember that on your choice depends your own future. And on the choice of a majority of you depends the speed of the coming of the new civilization. You can quicken it. You can retard it also. And the choice must be made.

—23 January 1918, New India

<sup>1</sup> The unquenchable demands of the people for the release of Dr. Besant and her colleagues in internment in Ootacamund and Coimbatore effected a speedy release.

# STATECRAFT

## THE ART OF POLITICS

[In] Politics as in everything else a man needs sound thought to make right action If men live from hand to mouth in politics they may often for a momentary gain incur a serious danger, and judging by the things of the moment only may lose the very object that they really desire to obtain

I mean by "politics" every form of activity which is carried on in a particular geographical district, under a Government of any kind that rules over that district, no matter what that Government may be called—imperial or local, municipal or parliamentary I distinguish political action from voluntary action by the element of force that enters into the constitution of the former, and the fact that if you want to escape from the scope of the action you must leave the geographical district over which the political government has authority

No more can you gain an idea of a real Society by taking a man separately, as though he were a marble and Society a heap of marbles with no cohesion in them, you can no more do it and understand Society, than you can tear ~~from~~ the living body one of its organs, and studying the ~~organ~~

itself, try to understand the working of the whole. For to understand the human body you must study it in life, in the functions, in the working of every part, in every single organ doing a particular work, not for its own gain but for the common good, and the nobler ideal that is spreading amongst men is that we live not to assert our rights but to do our duties, and so to make one mighty Unity where each shall discharge his functions for the common good of all.

Now India is in this remarkable position, that from her own past she brings down the ideal of a system that is essentially founded upon duty. India is [today a strange compound of conflicting theories, of conflicting ideas, is a strange compound of an ancient Nation ruled politically by a modern people, and the two ideas are here face to face. One, the old's idea of duty and the other, urged by those who would take as it were the western system completely, transport democracy from America and Great Britain into Indian soil, use the democratic methods, claim the democratic rights, employ here all the democratic organizations, not quite sure whether the soil will suit what is here an exotic, but forced by the necessities of the position to use some of the methods which are familiar in the hands of their rulers. Therefore, while for my own part I stand for the ideas' of ancient India, and look on that as a thousandfold loftier than the mushroom civilizations that have grown up in later days, none the less am I bound to admit that we must deal with the country as we have it, and that where you are pushed into western methods, you must adapt your own methods somewhat, so as to meet the new conditions, so as to deal with the new ways of thought.

## THE THINKER

There are three great ways of influencing human life and human conduct the first and the greatest of all is the work of the Thinker, who by himself alone, face to face with the problems of life, uses all the powers that he has, and looking out into air which is unclouded by the dust raised in the strifes of parties, deals with principle instead of detail, deals with essence instead of form, the Thinker, he who gives out to the world some mighty thought Action is but for a day, thought is everlasting in its generating energy, and therefore the greatest among the sons of men, nature's most imperial children, are the Thinkers

## THE TEACHER

Then from the sphere of thought there comes down a great idea into the sphere of discussion, it passes from the brain of the Thinker to the lips of the teacher, and the teacher going out amongst his fellowmen and gathering masses of the people together, uses all his power of brain, all his imaginative ability, all his skill of golden tongue and deftness of oratorical presentment, to popularize among these masses of the people that thought which was born in the brain of the Thinker

## THE POLITICIAN

Then comes the third stage—action The great thought is to become bread for the hungry, and drink for the thirsty, and shelter for the homeless, and defence for the oppressed There is the work of the politician, there is the work of the actor He applies to practice that which the

Thinker has thought, which the teacher has uttered, and he brings it down into the practical life of man, and makes the common lot happier and better by applying to the ordinary daily life the great thoughts and the teachings that have gone before

There should be no quarrel between the politician and the teacher, no quarrel between the politician and the Thinker. Each is wanted by the other. The Thinker is like the head, and without the head the body could not act, the politician is like the hands, and without the hands you could not have action, though the brain should plan . . . But there should be no confusion between the functions. The Thinker weakens his power if he mixes himself up with the strifes of political parties. Nor should the teacher be a politician, for the teacher is to put the ideal before the eyes of men. No ideal can at once be put into complete practice, no ideal can be carried uninjured through the struggles of a legislative assembly; for there the principle has to be whittled away, has to be subjected to compromise, has to be narrowed down . . . Compromise is a necessary part of political action and you cannot avoid it. Statesmanship is skilful compromise. Therefore, I say, the teacher should never be a politician. Let him set up the ideal which politicians are to work towards, let him stand aloof, holding up the picture which is to attract the hearts of men. The work of the politician [is] to make the ideal ultimately realizable by going towards it. Step by step he must work in the right direction, and the ideal must be held up steadily, in order that the final direction may not be lost in the necessarily devious walking

Some of you are politicians. How are you going to choose your lines of advance? Has it ever struck you that the current of thought in a nation is that which is seen in the hopes, the aspirations, the longings of the young? Therefore I say, watch the young, for what moves them is a movement of the future, and if you want to legislate on lines that will last, see what is most touching the hearts of the young ones, for there is the future life of the people, there is what it will desire.

The duties of the politician are what were in olden days the duties of the Kshattriya, the great caste in the old days that had all these political duties in hand, that had this charge in the State, and was bound to administer it for the common good.

We find the politician limited. He may make a good law, but if the people are bad the good law is useless. He may make an improvement in outside shape, but if the people are unworthy of it the old evils return despite the new shape he has made. Therefore is it that you need the teacher, therefore is it that you need the *Thinker*, and only where they are at work in a nation, making noble ideals that purify the heart, only there will the politician be successful and the progress of the nation be secured.

What has Theosophy to do with politics? I say that it has everything to do with them. It has to build up a State of which Brotherhood shall be the foundation, in which the rule should be accepted that every child born into a civilized Nation has a right to be surrounded by the conditions that enable him to develop to the utmost every faculty that he brings with him into the world. Until that is the rule of a

State, there is no true civilization. There lies, then, the duty of a Theosophist. He has to deal with politics in order that a Nation may flourish. The question of the Liberty of a people—do you call that politics or not? I call it politics, because to me “politics” means the organized life of a Nation. It is not party politics, it is not a question of this man up and the other man down, it is not a question of quarrelling between different detailed views and methods, but the Liberty of a Nation is a point that no one, who feels the duty of a religious man to his Nation, can ever possibly put aside on any pretext. The great reason why a Nation should be Free and Self-Governing is that because without these a man is not a man—he is only a half-man.

The duty of a Theosophist here is to help in the liberation of India—not of The Theosophical Society, because our Society is international, everywhere, and you cannot ask a Russian Theosophist to help in the liberation of India. I speak only of the Indian Theosophists and Theosophists who are residents here. The duty is not imposed upon them by The Society, but by the principles of Theosophy. There lies the duty of the true Theosophist—a human duty, a National duty, a duty which comes from service to the Motherland, which none has a right to forbid. Your individual influence on the lesser political movements will be valuable, because it should be guided by the wisdom you have gained amongst us, and by the application of those great laws of Karma, Reincarnation, and Brotherhood—the only sure foundation for the continued life of any Nation.

## A LESSON IN STATECRAFT

During the short space of three years in the Indian political field, Dr Besant secured that which has not since been achieved—the union of the dominant Hindu and Muslim elements and the union of the conflicting Congress elements. Forgotten were differences. India alone was remembered.

Mr Jinnah then worked for a "United India." Hindus spoke from the Muslim League platform and Muslims from the Congress platform, their two Congresses having concurrent gatherings.

If any one doubts that Dr Besant was the uniting force between the Hindu and Muslim communities, the tribute of the Hon Syed Ali Nabi, the last speaker before the fateful "Self-Determination" resolution was put to vote in the 1917 Conference of the All-India Muslim League, will make the position clear.

"I should be untrue to myself, untrue to the Muslim community, untrue to the community at large if I failed at the moment to publicly acknowledge the services rendered by that great and sincere lover of India, Mrs Annie Besant, who was mainly instrumental in bringing about the spirit of unity between the two great communities." The reporter here inserts the words "long and continued applause." The speaker concluded "It was she who made that union possible and we cannot be sufficiently grateful to her."

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"It was Dr Besant's efforts with the great leaders, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, at Poona in 1914, and ever since, which brought about the happy union, whose full significance has been seen and felt at Lucknow which has closed the gulf of nine long years. New India has been instrumental in bringing the two Parties in the Congress together, so that today there are no Moderates and Extremists, but all Nationalists, the majority of whom have seen the wisdom of Mrs Besant's contentions."

—3 January 1917, Editorial New India

"So the Home Rulers have at last captured both the Congress and the League. Glory to Mrs Besant! Her bitter persecution has not gone in vain. Practically the whole of the educated Indian community has caught the cry of Home Rule in right earnest, first raised by this illustrious lady. Even moderate Congressmen, who did not see things eye to eye with her, have become converts to her views."

—*Amrita Bazar Patrika*

How was this miracle accomplished, a miracle that all today would see repeated? Dr Besant herself reveals the secret

"Nothing is too great a sacrifice if it secures a united front."

Of the deliberations of the historic Calcutta Congress in 1917 Dr Besant tells a story that might well be called "A Lesson in Statesmanship".

The Committees of the Congress and the Muslim League met for some hours, and were profoundly interesting. On all the main principles the representatives of both bodies were thoroughly at one, a few very minor points of difference having been settled at Calcutta. The difference was on the details of the representation of the two communities in the Legislative Councils of the future, and the interest lay in the thorough threshing out of every aspect of the question, the grasp of principles and of details, the statesmanlike willingness to come to a common agreement, and the admirable spirit of sacrifice and the good feeling manifested by almost every member of the two parties. If proof were wanted of the capacity of the Indians to govern themselves it was found in that Chamber; both parties made sacrifices, the Muslims in Bengal, the Hindus in the United Provinces.

With the utmost patience, a *via media* was sought, almost found, lost again, again acquired, until finally complete agreement was reached, and Hindus and Muslims stood shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart. All honour to the leaders of both communities alike, for both realized that Indian unity was the supreme necessity, and, refusing to yield to the clamour outside among the more ignorant of both communities, they resolutely led the way to union. Posterity will bless them for their patriotism and their courage. How ringing were the cheers which later on welcomed the Muslim leaders to the Congress platform, and those which welcomed the Congress leaders to the Muslim League platform. The representatives of India in both Halls passionately acclaimed the union, and the joint scheme is now accepted by a United India, to be presented to the British Nation as the demand of a Nation awake to its own needs, and conscious of its own strength.

## THE FAMOUS CONGRESS-LEAGUE SCHEME

### WHAT WERE ITS IRREDUCIBLE MINIMA ?

I helped to formulate the Congress-League Scheme, passed by the Lucknow Congress in 1916. I have never varied in my support of that Scheme from its passage in Lucknow to the present day. I hold it to be, as I have often said, our irreducible minimum, and I will accept no Reforms that fall short of its essential features—the four-fifths majority of elected members, the control of the purse, the enlarged franchise, including the Hindu-Musa

entente, a moiety of the Executive Council representing the majority of the elected members. This, through the control of the purse by the Legislature, and the elective half of the Executive, ensures Responsible Government in the near future, and therein lies its value. The "irreducible minimum," it must be noted, applies to the Government of India as well as to Local Governments.

—22 June 1918, *New India*

### *The Power of the Purse*

The essential part of the Congress-League Scheme [is] the power of the purse and a substantial elected majority. These are the two points that really matter. I was asked by one of the high officials of the country, "Mrs Besant, why do you want a majority in the Provincial Council? Why not be satisfied with the Scheme of Panchayat, Taluq and District Board and Municipalities?" I answered, "Unless we have a majority and the power of the purse, we shall never have the money that we want for carrying out our schemes of local Self-Government." I was asked, "Why do you want it in the Supreme Council?" My answer was, "for the same reason." Unless we have the power of the purse and an elected majority in the Supreme Government, we shall not be able to deal with the customs and the excise and to foster our industries, and to place the whole trade of the country in the hands of the Indians instead of in the hands of the English merchant. We want all stages from the Panchayats, we cannot break a single link. I say there is nothing more vital to you than the control of the purse. Only then can you make the Executive Council responsible to the people.

—21 January 1918, *New India*

In judging of any scheme, remember the power of the purse is the most important part. If you find that the power of the purse is not given to your representatives, if you find that the power of the purse is in the hands of the Executive, then whatever glamour there may be in the other parts of the measure, the essential power will be out of your hands, and you will be helpless as you have been so long. That is what you have to consider.

—16 April 1918, *New India*

### *The Power of Deadlock*

The Power of the Purse in the hands of the Legislature and an irremovable Executive. Our critics say that it will bring a deadlock. I do not deny their statement, when the Executive is irremovable and the Legislature is representative, then if they come in conflict one or the other must yield. If the Legislature gives a mandate and the Executive refuses to carry it out, then the situation can be tided over by the Legislature by the one and the only way, *viz*, refusal of supplies. I, a gentle old woman, wish to follow only constitutional methods, and refusal of supplies is the potent weapon in our armoury. An irremovable Executive might ask the Legislature to go to their respective constituencies over and over again, and consult the nation on the point of grievances. If the constituencies re-elect them often and often, then the Executive must yield one day or the other. It is not that I am very fond of deadlocks. But, as Bright said, there can be no Constitution without deadlocks. In the schemes of all the English Colonies, there were

deadlocks We claim our scheme to be only the first step towards full Responsible Government

—15 March 1918, *New India*

### *The Enlarged Electorate*

The essentials of the Congress-League Scheme are that we asked for enlarged electorates, we asked that four-fifths might be elected and one-fifth nominated. We asked that there should not be less than 125 members in the Legislative Councils of major provinces and 50 to 75 in the minor. We asked that members should be elected on as broad a franchise as possible, that adequate representation for the representation of minorities should be provided, and with regard to Muhammadans we asked that they should be represented through special electorates in certain definite proportions, and lastly we asked that no bill or clause should be brought in which affected either Hindus or Muhammadans if three-fourths of the members of the Community in the Legislative Council objected to the bill

—1 August 1918, *New India*

### *A Time-Limit*

You must continue your agitation here and in England, with all the force you can command and rest not until you get what you want in one, and only one, Parliamentary statute clearly defining the stages and fixing an inexorable time-limit. In my Presidential Address in the Congress, I had put down the time-limit of ten years simply to give precision and pointedness to our demand. You may extend it if you like, but see that it definitely gets in the scheme

—15 March 1918, *New India*

We have asked that there shall be complete Responsible Government in India at an early date, not floating about in the air, not to be left indefinite, for we know that—that means a putting off and a putting off continually. The demand is that Self-Government should be given at an early date, and that the date is to be named in the Statute, so that there shall be no quarrel afterwards about it

—19 April 1918, *New India*

### *A Statute or Act of Parliament*

We asked that something positive in the shape of an Act of Parliament be passed for establishing Responsible Government in India. We do not ask for the abolition of the sovereignty of the Crown. We do not attack the Throne of the King-Emperor, but we say in our internal affairs, in the business of our own Nation, public and private, we ought to make our own laws, elect our own men, get rid of those men if they fail us after we have elected them. That is the freedom that every Colony enjoys and that freedom we claim for ourselves. We ask for equal rights with the Self-Governing Dominions, and without the right of direct representation in the central authority of the Empire our Self-Determination would not be complete. When the National Assembly is constituted, it may shape our Nation's future growth according to our instincts of nationality. We do not want another England, Scotland, France, or Germany. We want an India—Indian in thought, Indian in ways and customs, Indian in aspirations, Indian from head to foot, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. (Loud applause.)

That is the Nation of the future, and that is the Motherland that we worship When you say *Vande Mataram*, it is *Vande Mataram* that you worship and not some other land which is not yours

—Speech delivered 1 January 1919, *New India*

*The Broad Principle to which we must cling.*

No subordinate power is worth having if the power behind it remains—autocracy

Example No “provincial autonomy” while the supreme [authority] remains as it is at the present time with the power of the purse, with the power of the excise, and all the big resources of revenue in the hands of that Assembly and no power to the people to control it

—10 June 1918, *New India*

Personally I feel that the Central Council and Provincial Councils should advance side by side If such advance is not made as it was suggested and worked out in the Congress-League Scheme, you will have the extreme difficulty of the Provinces going towards Responsible Government with autocracy on the top of them Unless we can get rid of the autocracy in its essential point, it will be of very small value to win provincial autonomy, and there will be a large number of States, which, being completely separated, are helpless, are unable to focus their opinions and their forces on the Central Government, while the autocracy stands above the whole of them, able to interfere at any moment where it disapproves of the action of any of the States It is not a case of these States being Self-Governing.

strong and held together, strengthened and nourished by the Central Government responsible to the people, but it is a case of separate States, themselves autonomous, in the grip of autocracy over the whole of them. Hence, any analogy drawn from the United States of America or Switzerland is entirely misleading.

—1 August 1918, *New India*

## HOW WAS THE CONGRESS-LEAGUE SCHEME TO BE ACHIEVED?

### *By Organization*

You may have seen I am trying to make an organization for the whole of the country, in that in every district there would be one man ready to act in an emergency, who shall have one friend in every taluq ready to follow, who in turn will have representatives in towns and villages ready to act when the word is given. I am working out that, in order that we may have machinery whereby we can organize our agitation.

—16 April 1918, *New India*

One matter of immediate importance is the forming of a Provincial Committee with District Sub-Committees for the selection of candidates for all elective offices in each Presidency—Legislative Councils, District Boards, Municipalities, etc. In every election, candidates belonging to the National Party should be ready, presented to the constituencies long before elections begin, that they may be familiar to those whom they seek to represent. The appointment

of these Political Committees and Sub-Committees in this Presidency should be at once taken in hand by the Madras Indian leaders, though later they would probably be appointed for each area by the Council administering it

—10 and 17 April 1914, *The Commonwealth*

India's liberty is now in the balance, and we must win it when the opportunity is given us, because opportunity not grasped becomes an obstacle in the future

You want meetings in every association where politics may be discussed. You want meetings on street-corners of towns, villages and cities. Enthusiasm and love of liberty for India exist all over India just now. That Monster Petition<sup>1</sup> has done much, but people must follow in the wake of that and teach the people who are roused to interest about what has already been done and what yet remains to be done. Students can help to collect money—I suppose G.O. 559<sup>2</sup> does not prohibit that,—older men can first study and then talk. If you explain the main features of the Congress-League Scheme and emphasize them and make them clear with illustrations, you will gradually get the whole mass of Indian people to speak out for it like one man.

We must all give to India this service. Let smaller things wait. Let the Mother see the freedom you are to win, see the glory you are to create, remember that that Mother must depend upon every one of you in order that her chains may be broken, and remember if you do your work, you

<sup>1</sup> A petition signed by millions of Indians, sent from the Home Rule League to the Viceroy

<sup>2</sup> A repressive order controlling the activities of students